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– Frank Colasonti Jr., pg 4

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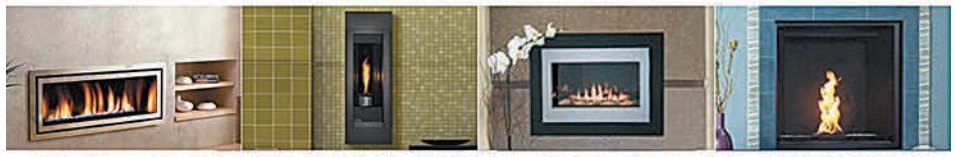

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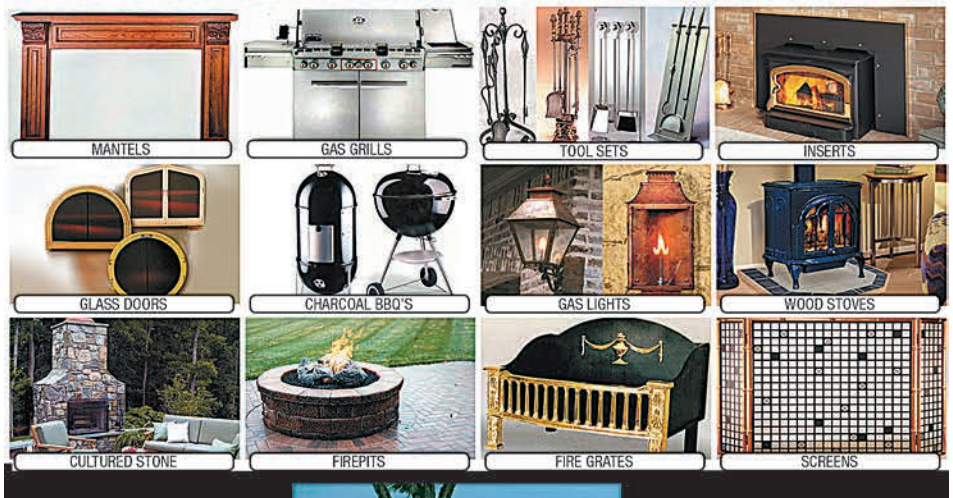

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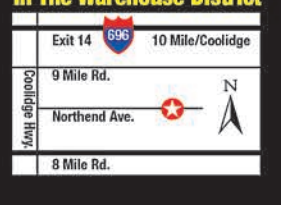

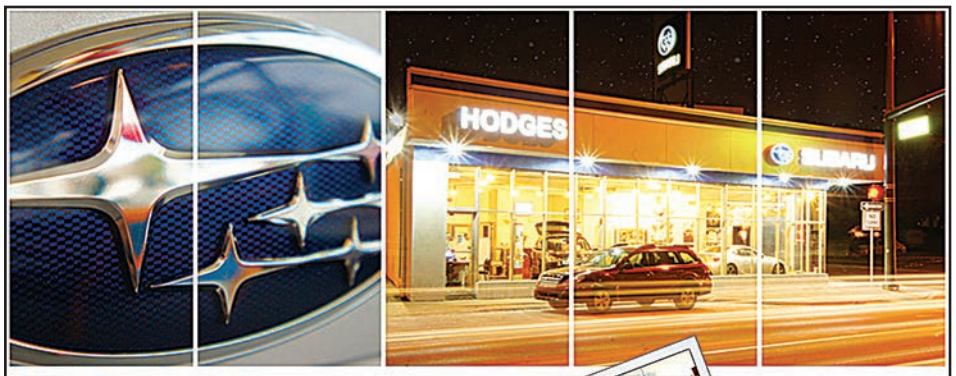

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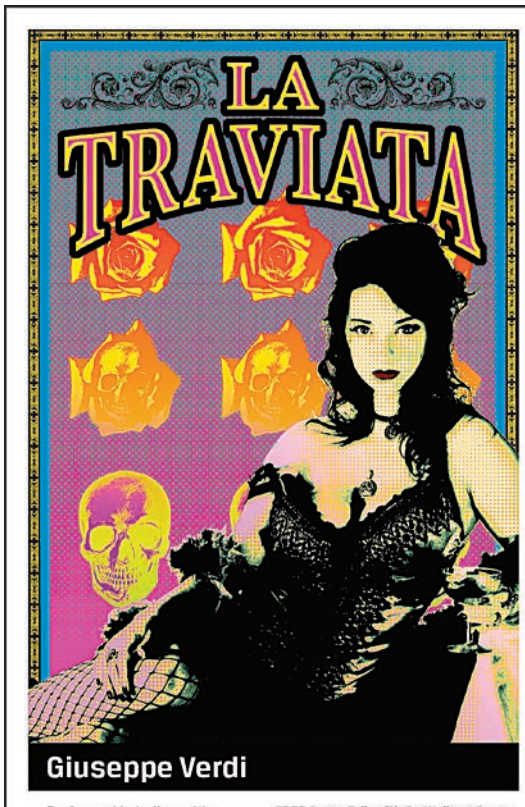

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COVER

14 The unlikeliest of love stories

Photo: Jared Leto in "Dallas Buyers Club" / Focus Features

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> When you hear about a male revue, you think about guys grinding their pelvises in girls faces with no clothes on ... It's more about the sexiness.
>
> – Jeff Timmons, pg. 16

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PUBLISHERS
Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

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EDITORIAL
Editor in Chief
Susan Horowitz, 734.293.7200 x 12
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor
Chris Azzopardi, 734.293.7200 x 24
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Associate Editor
Benjamin Jenkins, 734.293.7200 x 14
ben@pridesource.com

News Staff Writer
Crystal Proxmire

Arts & Theater Editor
Donald V. Calamia, curtaincalls@pridesource.com

Calendar Editor
Shelby Clark, shelby@pridesource.com

CREATIVE
Art Director
Benjamin Jenkins, ben@pridesource.com

Webmaster & MIS Director
Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Contributing Writers
Charles Alexander, Michelle E. Brown, Todd Heywood, Jerome Stuart Nichols, Kate Opalewski, Anthony Paull, Andrea Poteet, Eric W. Rader, Gwendolyn Ann Smith, Dawn R. Wolfe

Cartoonists
Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau

Contributing Photographers
Andrew Potter

ADVERTISING & SALES
Director of Sales
Jan Stevenson, 734.293.7200 x 22
jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives
Ed Bohach, 734.293.7200 x 15
ed@pridesource.com

Ann Cox, 734.293.7200 x 13
anncox@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative
Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

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Business Office
Diane Smith, dianesmith@pridesource.com

Circulation & Distribution
Diane Smith

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Frank Colasonti, Jr.: Pioneer Paved The Way In Birmingham Schools

History Month Exhibit Reminder Of Path Toward Equality

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

BIRMINGHAM – Students at Birmingham Groves High School got a lesson in LGBT history thanks to a month-long display in the school's media center in October. And while the current students take the time to learn about LGBT history in general, it is also a reminder to teachers and administration about the history of LGBT equality efforts right there in their own district.

In 1990 the only discussion of homosexuality that took place in most schools was when bullies would call their victims "faggot" in the hallways, or maybe the whisper of a gay man screwing a monkey when AIDS came up in health classes. The 90s were not a good time for most kids to be gay. And for teachers it was nearly impossible to be out at work. To this day there are not employment protections for LGBT people in Michigan, though unions and public pressure do offer somewhat more of a safety net than there was back then.

Frank Colasonti, Jr., a counselor and health teacher at Groves, kept his sexuality hidden on the job. But in 1990 that changed unexpectedly. Colasonti was volunteering at Pridefest when a reporter from the Detroit News took his picture and asked him some questions.

He got a call from a fellow teacher, who warned him that he was in the paper. "I was afraid to go to work," he said. "I called in sick. I tried to get help from my union rep., but there was nothing they could do." When he came into work the next day, he was called into the principal's office.

The recent LGBT History Month display at Birmingham Groves High School continues to teach students about diversity.

"The administration sat me down and said 'We saw the article. Tell us what you want.' I couldn't believe it. I didn't know what to expect, but I sure hadn't thought of that."

Colasonti told his bosses that he expected to keep his job and not be treated any differently than he had before. He also wanted the ability to be open about his sexuality and to advocate for gay teachers and kids. He wanted to make sure that no one would have to hide who they are in the Birmingham School District.

Not only did they accept it, they embraced a spirit of openness and equality moving forward. Over the next two years, Colasonti developed a lesson plan for the health class to address LGBT issues.

When the curriculum went before the school board for approval, former Gov. George Romney flew in to speak against it. Joining him were anti-gay speakers from across the state. The crowd was so large that the meeting had to be held in the auditorium of Seaholm High School. Armed guards stood watch over the proceeding, while undercover agents mingled among the audience members. Colasonti sat in the front row, nervously listening to anti-gay rhetoric as well as supportive parents, teachers

In 1990, Frank Colasonti, Jr. told his bosses that he expected to keep his job and not be treated any differently than he had before. He also wanted the ability to be open about his sexuality and to advocate for gay teachers and kids. He wanted to make sure that no one would have to hide who they are in the Birmingham School District. To his surprise the administrators embraced him and his concerns in a spirit of openness and equality

See Pioneer, page 12

State Senate Could Pass Bill Against Cyberbullying

Anderson Sees Bill As Chance To Strengthen Existing Law

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

A rumor posted on Twitter. A barrage of insulting text messages. A fake Facebook profile in your child's name. Embarrassing pictures posted without permission. Nasty emails that can reach your kid at any hour of the day or night.

These are just some of the ways that bullying has grown beyond the halls of schools and the hours when class is in session. By reaching out through technology, students can now taunt and torment each other 24/7.

And in Michigan there is nothing that school districts can do about it. At least not yet. But a bill introduced by State Senator Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, would require school districts to address cyber-bullying as part of their already mandated anti-bullying policies. It would also require districts to report their bullying statistics to the state.

Senate Bill 0074 passed unanimously in committee in early October, and is expected to pass the senate with bipartisan support.

"I started on anti-bullying efforts in 2005 when I was in the House," Anderson said. "The thing that drove me more than anything else was the suicide of Matt Epling . Matt was a young man in the East Lansing School District who took his own life after being bullied. I met with his parents Kevin and Tammy Epling.

Sen. Glenn Anderson

I was reluctant to meet with them, not knowing how it would be after experiencing such a loss. But then they decided they wanted to be part of making a difference. They wanted to turn something tragic into something good. That's where it initially came from." He added that Kevin Epling now travels the country doing presentations about bullying prevention, and runs the website www.bullypolice.org to track anti-bullying legislation.

SB0074 adds on to the bullying legislation that was passed in 2011, which required districts to create anti-bullying policies. The bill was a weaker version than similar bills Anderson had introduced in years passed, but amendments can now fortify the protections.

Missing from the 2011 bill and the 2013 one is any mention of LGBT or other minority students. Anderson said he had pushed for that in the past, but it prevented him from getting bipartisan support. "Enumeration became a lightning rod," he said. "But I've not given up on it. Sometimes it takes small steps to get where we need to be."

The bill was co-sponsored by Sen. Mike Kowall (R-White Lake) and Sen. Tory Rocca (R-Sterling Heights), along with several other Democrats. However there are some lingering issues of free speech.

"We are trying to work with the ACLU to makes sure we address concerns they may have about free speech. It should not be a problem to address. I believe we can deal with that. Other states have similar laws, so there are examples out there of good language."

Anderson said he encourages anyone to reach out to their legislators to support the bills. The vote has not yet been scheduled.

Mich. Filmmaker Addresses Bullying From Bully's View

Limited Screening Hopes To Find Wide Audience

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Birmingham filmmaker Amy Weber is sharing the one project she said is the most important in her life, The Bully Chronicles.

The 100 percent Michigan-made film is being celebrated at the Uptown Film Festival Nov. 7-9 at the Palladium 12 and Birmingham 8 Theatres in Birmingham.

The Bully Chronicles, which features real teens, teachers, and parents, is described by Weber as "a movement toward change in the form of a narrative feature film shot in an unscripted, documentary style."

In 2011, the award-winning documentary Bully, directed by Lee Hirsch, followed the lives of five students who faced bullying on a daily basis. That film mobilized hundreds of thousands to take action against the epidemic of school bullying in the U.S.

For the first time, Weber wants to tell the story from the bully's perspective, further addressing one of the most prevalent issues in society.

According to the film's official website www.thebullychronicles.com, the story follows Avery Keller, a beautiful and popular high school sophomore, whose systematic physical, emotional and cyber bullying results in the suicide attempt of her former best friend, Jessica Burns. The filmmaker explores Avery's life to uncover the reason why a seemingly 'perfect' young woman would engage in bullying. With the help of hidden camera footage taken by Jessica and her best friend, Brian Slater, the story unfolds through the discovery

See Film, page 7

BRIEFS

MICHIGAN

New Michigan AIDS Coalition Funded

A new coalition of nine Michigan AIDS organizations received a $25,000 grant from a national AIDS foundation to develop a strategic plan to collaborate more closely. Contributing factors such as economic stresses, changes in funding from governmental agencies and the impact of the new Affordable Care Act requires that Michigan's AIDS agency leaders explore new ways to provide necessary services with less resources.

The Community Restructuring Initiative (CRI) includes nine Michigan AIDS service organizations; AIDS Partnership Michigan (APM), Community AIDS Resource and Education Services (CARES), Community Health Awareness Group (CHAG), Grand Rapids Red Project, Health Emergency Lifeline Programs (HELP), HIV/AIDS Resource Center, Lansing Area AIDS Network (LAAN), Michigan AIDS Coalition (MAC), and Wellness AIDS Services.

CRI recently was awarded a $25,000 planning grant from AIDS United in Washington D.C. CRI was formed after a one day presentation in April facilitated by the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), and the Michigan Department of Community Health, at which Vance Yoshida, a senior consultant with LaPiana Consultants, nationally recognized experts in restructuring for non-profits, presented a variety of ways and means for agencies to consider in protecting and strengthening critical HIV/AIDS services.

WEST BLOOMFIELD

Gay Author To Be Featured At Annual Jewish Book Fair

Author Joel Derfner will discuss his recently published book, Lawfully Wedded Husband, How My Gay Marriage Will Save the American Family during the 62nd Annual Jewish Book Fair at the Jewish Community Center.

When Derfner's boyfriend proposed to him, there was nowhere in America the two could legally marry. That changed quickly, and before long the two were on what they expected to be a rollicking journey to married bliss. What they didn't realize was that they would confront the dilemmas every couple faces on their way to the altar. What kind of ceremony would they have? What would they wear? Did they have to invite Great Aunt Sophie? They had questions about a healthy relationship, the definition of marriage and ultimately, what makes a family.

The book signing and talk will be Nov. 17 at 3 p.m. JGN and the ACLU will host an afterglow reception. Cost is an $18 donation to the Jewish Gay Network.

ANN ARBOR

Evening Of Sacred Song To Benefit Jim Toy Center

Sacred Song, a multi-ethnic choral group, presents the Seventeenth Annual Evening of Sacred Song, an evening of singing and instrumental music. Since 1995, the group's annual December concert has affirmed the values of social justice and spiritual inclusiveness. Members include local favorites D. Yarrow Halstead, Robin Wilson, Laura Machida, Faye Askew-King, Barb Stahler-Sholk, Edie Lewis, Mary Wilson, Cassandra Compton-Montgomery, Zakiyyah Ali, Jeffrey Pickell, Deborah Greene, LaRon Williams and Gae Winn. Guest Performers this year are Barb Haggart and Julie Leadbetter of "Me, Her and Her."

Sacred Song will be 7 p.m. Dec. 7 at Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, 2275 Platt Rd. Requested donation is $20.00 per ticket. Presale ticket price is $15.00. No one will be turned away due to inability to pay. Admission is free for children under age 12. All proceeds will benefit the Jim Toy Community Center.

Extended briefs are available online at:

>> www.PrideSource.com

BRIEFS

NEW YORK

VIPs Join T-shirt Protest Of Russia's Anti-gay Law

Actors Jonah Hill, Jamie Lee Curtis and Kristen Bell are among a batch of celebrities donning Russian-language "Love Conquers Hate" T-shirts to show support for gays in Russia alarmed by a new law banning pro-gay "propaganda."

It's part of an initiative launched Monday by the Human Rights Campaign, the largest U.S. gay-rights group.

Participating celebrities will share photos of themselves wearing the T-shirts on their social media platforms, encouraging followers to do likewise. The HRC says all net proceeds from shirt sales will go to a fund supporting gay-rights efforts in Russia.

"We stand with Russia's LGBT community and their allies," said HRC President Chad Griffin. "We are committed to doing as much as we possibly can to support their efforts to repeal this heinous law."

According to the HRC, other celebrities joining the T-shirt campaign include Fergie, Kelly Osbourne, Ricky Martin, Kevin Bacon, Doutzen Kroes, Anthony Bourdain, Tim Gunn, Perez Hilton, Todd Glass, Jonathan Del Arco, Amanda Leigh Dunn, Ana Matronic, Olympic swimmer Craig Gibbons, NBA basketball player Jason Collins, country singer Maggie Rose and soccer players Jozy Altidore, Lori Lindsey and Megan Rapinoe.

The law banning "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations among minors" was enacted in June.

Gay-rights activists have asked the International Olympic Committee to call for the law's repeal ahead of the Winter Olympics, to be held in Russia in February.

Online: www.loveconquershate.org

NEWARK, N.J.

NJ Couple Sues Christie Over Gay 'Therapy' Ban

(AP) –}A southern New Jersey couple has sued Gov. Chris Christie over his signing of a bill banning so-called "gay conversion therapy," claiming it violates their constitutional rights.

The couple, who isn't identified in court papers filed on Friday, claims the law violates their rights to free speech and free exercise of religion because it prevents them from seeking treatment for their 15-year-old son.

According to the lawsuit, the teen suffers from "unwanted gender identity disorder and unwanted same-sex attractions" and has contemplated suicide.

Christie signed the bill in August. It bans licensed therapists from trying to turn gay teenagers straight. He said the health risks of trying to change a child's sexual orientation, as identified by the American Psychological Association, trump concerns over setting limits on parental choice.

Extended briefs are available online at:
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Senate Advances Passage Of ENDA

Cloture Vote Succeeds In Moving Debate Forward

BY LISA KEEN

The U.S. Senate invoked a motion for cloture Monday afternoon, 61 to 30, just one vote more than the 60 it needed to force the chamber to take up debate and consideration of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

It was not clear exactly when the Senate would begin debate, but its passage seems almost certain, given that the procedural vote drew at least eight Republicans to join Democrats and Independents to support its movement to the floor.

The bill seeks to prohibit negative employment actions against employees or applicants due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Even before the Senate convened, The Hill newspaper predicted ENDA would move to the floor thanks to an announcement Monday morning by Republican Senator Dean Heller of Nevada that he would support the measure.

But House Speaker John Boehner also made clear Monday that he had no intention of allowing ENDA to the House floor. Through a spokesman, he said ENDA would increase "frivolous litigation and cost American jobs." The comments were not a surprise. Boehner has said previously that, "There are ample laws already in place" to deal with workplace discrimination.

President Obama's Organizing for America group says there are 29 states where there are no laws protecting employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. They include Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

In addition to his own essay in support of ENDA, published Sunday night at huffingtonpost.com, President Obama's organization sent out an e-mail to its supporters asking them to sign a petition for the measure.

Senate Majority Leader Reid said the existing "patchwork" of state laws prohibiting sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination is not good enough. He said House Speaker Boehner should take his cue from 56 percent of Republicans nationally who support ENDA. And 81 percent of all Americans approve the measure.

Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), has championed the bill in his Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP). He said more than 56 percent of Americans live in states that give "no recourse under law" for discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Senate Majority Leader Reid said the existing "patchwork" of state laws prohibiting sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination is not good enough.

Harkin credited Senate sponsor Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) for mustering the 60 votes the bill needs to pass the motion to put it on the floor and championing it. Harkin likened consideration of ENDA to that of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

"Here we are taking one more step to make the American family more inclusive," said an enthusiastic Harkin. "...This is an historic step for the United States Senate to do today."

Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.), the senate's only openly LGBT member, offered remarks before the cloture vote. She noted that Wisconsin, 20 states, and the District of Columbia have laws that prohibit discrimination against gays and lesbians but that "in over two dozen states it is legal to discriminate against LGBT employees."

"That is simply wrong," said Baldwin, "and this legislation seeks to right that wrong."

Before today's vote, the Senate mustered 60 votes for 71 percent of the cloture motions it has faced this year. It failed to pass two such motions (on judicial nominees) last week.

Twenty-five Republicans voted for a cloture motion that allowed the Senate to pass a continuing resolution to fund the government without defunding the Affordable Care Act.

ENDA got its first and only U.S. Senate vote in 1996, when it failed 49 to 50 (one senator had to be out of town on an emergency). The Republicans held a four-vote majority.

It has passed the House one time, in September 2007, on a vote of 235 to 184. Democrats had a 35-vote majority at the time.

The text of this year's bill is the same as it was in 2011, covering both sexual orientation and gender identity. The bill also makes clear that employers may require employees to adhere to "reasonable dress or grooming standards...provided that the employer permits any employee who has undergone gender transition prior to the time of employment, and any employee who has notified the employer that the employee has undergone or is undergoing gender transition after the time of employment, to adhere to the same dress or grooming standards as apply for the gender to which the employee has transitioned or is transitioning."

President Obama's Organizing for America group says there are 29 states where there are no laws protecting employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, including Michigan.

KICK To Host Health Expo

DETROIT - KICK, the agency for LGBT African Americans, is hosting the second annual Health & Wellness Expo from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Nov. 16 at KICK - The Center in Detroit, 48 Burroughs St., Detroit. This free, community-wide expo will focus specifically on issues of importance to the black community, including HIV/AIDS, diabetes, heart disease, mental health, domestic violence and smoking cessation. Topics will include HIV/AIDS, diabetes, heart disease, addition, mental, domestic violence and smoking cessation.

There will be health screenings, lectures and activities throughout the day. Scheduled to appear are Kezia Curtis, organizer and farmer of Freedom Freedom,

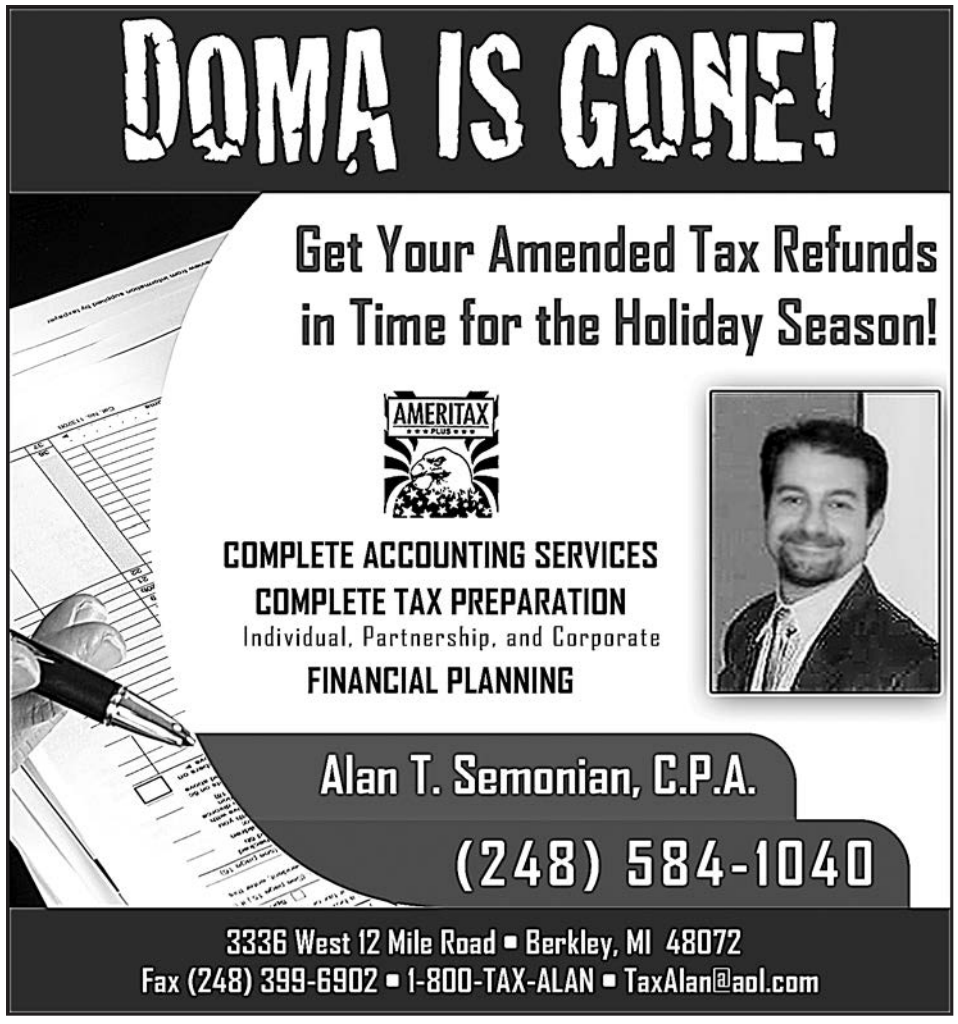
Makini Acket, creator of Cultural Roots Art Camp, Terrell Thomas, fitness instructor of The Thomas Group, Alfredo Smith, early intervention specialist from AIDS Partnership Michigan and Jinannh Jones, special outreach coordinator Michigan AIDS Coalition.

"This is an opportunity for health care providers and other medical/pharmaceutical representatives to present health information and resources, and for the community to take advantage of a variety of screenings as well as access vital information," said Rhiannon Chester, program coordinator.

"The increasing rise of HIV/AIDS infection rates in African American men is out of control," said Curtis Lipscomb, executive director at KICK. "Prevention efforts have been proven to lower the harshness of health disparities. Safe spaces to discuss healthy sexual relationships are essential and necessary for meaningful and relevant dialogue between persons of all ages."

According to the Center of Disease Control, the five leading deaths of Blacks are heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes and unintentional injuries. In addition, Blacks or African Americans have disproportionately high prevalence of hypertension, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, asthma, and poor nutrition risk factors.

For more information contact program coordinator Rhiannon Chester at 313-285-9733 or rhiannonchester@e-kick.org.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► **Film**
Continued from p. 5

of documented, self-recorded video journals and confrontations with the bully.

"The hope for this film is to spark a movement organically as young people relate to it as both victims and abusers. Parents and schools may begin to realize, if they haven't already, that we have lost touch with our youth. This film will lead us in the right direction with education and awareness. It will help us find solutions so we, as a society, can make things better," said Weber, who has developed, written and produced more than 40 award-winning educational documentaries dealing with youth issues and education. She was honored as the 2011 Michigan Filmmaker of the Year for her first feature film, Annabelle and Bear. She is a former university educator, and the founder and owner of production company Radish Creative Group, Inc. in Royal Oak.

Weber said she is "honored" to share a weekly blog with her readers at The Huffington Post online. "I believe with all my soul that the time has come to raise our voices and speak the truth about how cruelty can destroy the human spirit and crumble our will to keep going," she said.

"We are dealing with young people in their formative years. They are making mistakes and trying on different personalities, and different coping mechanisms," she said. "This movement is about reaching the one's who are bullying and get to the underlying issues causing this in the first place. What's going on with that child that would cause this relentless pursuit to destroy another human being? As a society, we have to create a safe space for those who are struggling and don't know how to speak up."

The three-day festival will screen more than 100 diverse films, and will also host a series of special events, including an exclusive screening of The Bully Chronicles for the cast and crew only with a corresponding bullying solutions forum.

Weber explained why the film will not be open to the public at this point. "In order to be considered for competition at the Sundance Film Festival, The Bully Chronicles must be released as a world premiere. We are unable to participate in a way that we will, without a doubt, participate next year. The film will be available worldwide by then and it will be nice to bring it back home," she said.

Weber added that they are looking at different avenues for the film, including partnering with major sponsors. "We are trying to find the right spot to release the film to create the most impact. We want to give it the best chance to reach as large of an audience as possible."

This year's festival includes more filmmakers and productions from across the globe, according to Kirk Miller, UFF co-executive director. Miller said the goal is "to continue to raise awareness of the importance of a thriving film industry in Michigan."

Filmmaker and University of Michigan-Dearborn professor, H. James Gilmore's will debut Men at Work: Voices from Detroit's Underground Economy. Guest House is the latest from Los Angeles-based filmmaker Aaron Wolf. There will be an exclusive screening of ESPN Films' The Fab Five hosted by Detroit native and original Fab Five member Jalen Rose.

BRIEFS

LOUISVILLE, KY.

Same-sex Couple Seeks Right To Divorce in Ky.

(AP) – A same-sex couple who married in Massachusetts is seeking a divorce in Kentucky.

The case has presented a dilemma since Kentucky does not recognize gay marriage.

Judges and divorce lawyers told The Courier Journal that the case filed in Jefferson Family Court involving Alysha Romero and Rebecca Sue Romero is the first of its kind in the state.

Alysha Romero's lawyer, Louis Waterman, said the women should be allowed to part ways in Kentucky instead of having to move back to Massachusetts for divorce proceedings.

"I have a career here, a life here, and I think I should have the same right as a heterosexual to divorce here," said Alysha Romero.

But both opponents and supporters of gay marriage say the court's only choice will be to dismiss the petition because Kentucky law bans gay marriage and the recognition of such marriages.

Waterman says he'll appeal if the case is dismissed. He said he would take the case to the Kentucky Supreme Court and argue that the state's marriage amendment should be thrown out because it violates equal protection of law guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Beth Littrell, a staff attorney for Lambda Legal, that isn't involved in the case, says the reasoning to deny a divorce to the couple doesn't make sense.

"It is an illogical and ironic position," she said in an interview.

Opponents of gay marriage rejected her argument.

"The marriage can't either cease or continue because legally it does not exist," said Martin Cothran, an analyst for the Family Foundation of Kentucky.

Professor Mary Patricia Byrn of William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minn., said states that prohibit same-sex marriage haven't allowed divorces, but noted in a law journal article that it was a possibility because many states like Kentucky wrote marriage amendments to prevent same-sex couples from getting "the benefits of marriage."

"Divorce is not a benefit of marriage," she said. "It is the unfortunate result of a failed marriage."

INDIANAPOLIS

DePauw, Wabash Join Opposition To Gay Marriage Ban

(AP) – The battle over an effort to place Indiana's ban on gay marriage in the state constitution has picked up two new opponents.

DePauw University and Wabash College announced Monday that they are joining Freedom Indiana to oppose the proposed constitutional ban.

The bipartisan coalition includes top employers such as Eli Lilly and Cummins, along with the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and the Human Rights Campaign.

DePauw and Wabash issued a joint news release saying a constitutional ban would stifle efforts to attract talented faculty and staff to their campuses.

Indiana University also opposes the move. Purdue University isn't taking a position on the issue.

The amendment to the constitution faces a final vote in the 2014 legislative session. It would go to voters next November if it passes the Legislature.

Extended briefs are available online at:
>> www.PrideSource.com

Maine Candidate For Governor Announces He's Gay

BY DAVID SHARP

Michaud becomes the seventh openly out member of the 113th Congress. |AP Photo

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) – A six-term congressman and former paper mill worker hoping to unseat Maine Gov. Paul LePage next year announced that he's gay - a response to what he called a "whisper campaign" by political opponents hoping to weaken his gubernatorial bid.

U.S. Rep. Mike Michaud, 58, wrote in an op-ed provided to The Associated Press, the Portland Press Herald and the Bangor Daily News that "whisper campaigns, insinuations and push-polls" attempted to get voters to question whether he's gay.

"Allow me to save them the trouble with a simple, honest answer: 'Yes I am. But why should it matter?"' he wrote in the op-ed published Monday by the two newspapers.

The Democrat's announcement adds intrigue to a tight three-way race with LePage, the Republican incumbent, and wealthy independent Eliot Cutler.

A poll released in October suggested that Michaud is about even with LePage. Cutler, who finished second to LePage in the 2010 election, is touting himself as a better alternative in a state where unenrolled voters comprise the largest voting bloc.

Michaud didn't identify who he thinks is behind the alleged whisper campaign against him. His campaign has not previously raised the issue.

Cutler, whose campaign denied any involvement in a whisper campaign, said Michaud's disclosure should have no bearing on the race. LePage's campaign declined to comment.

It's unknown what impact, if any, Michaud's disclosure might have in the race. Maine voters approved a gay marriage law a year ago; Michaud supported the measure.

Michaud's announcement could help him among liberals who may be giving Cutler a look, but more importantly, it diffuses the topic of his sexuality, said Sandy Maisel, a political science professor at Colby College. "He's demonstrated his intent to be open and to take the high road," he said.

Across the country, gay and lesbian candidates are making strides.

There are currently 538 non-straight men and women holding political office in the U.S., and those include a U.S. senator and seven members of the U.S. House, according to the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, which aims to increase the number of openly gay leaders at all levels of government. Currently, there are no gay governors.

For his part, Michaud downplayed the significance of his announcement.

> *"That may seem like a big announcement to some people. For me, it's just a part of who I am, as much as being a third-generation mill worker or a lifelong Mainer. One thing I do know is that it has nothing to do with my ability to lead the state of Maine."*
>
> - Mike Michaud

"That may seem like a big announcement to some people. For me, it's just a part of who I am, as much as being a third-generation mill worker or a lifelong Mainer. One thing I do know is that it has nothing to do with my ability to lead the state of Maine," Michaud wrote.

Born in Millinocket, he worked in the Great Northern Paper Mill in East Millinocket when he launched his career in the Legislature. In Washington, he has focused on veterans' issues and is considered a moderate Democrat, part of the "Blue Dog" caucus.

The son and grandson of mill workers, Michaud said he's never forgotten from where he came.

"Most of all, I was brought up believing you should judge a person based on the content of his or her character, not by their race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. That's a value I know most Mainers share," he said.

Michaud, who never has married, said he never liked to talk about himself but wants people "to know that I am not ashamed of who I am." A spokesman declined to say if he's in a relationship.

"And if seeing someone from my background, in my position openly acknowledge the fact that he's gay makes it a little bit easier for future generations to live their lives openly and without fear, all the better," Michaud wrote.

If elected, he wouldn't be the first gay governor. New Jersey Gov. Jim McGreevey announced in 2004 that he was gay, making him the first openly gay governor. Nor is Michaud the first gay candidate. In Maryland, an openly gay candidate, Democrat Heather Mizeur, is running for governor.

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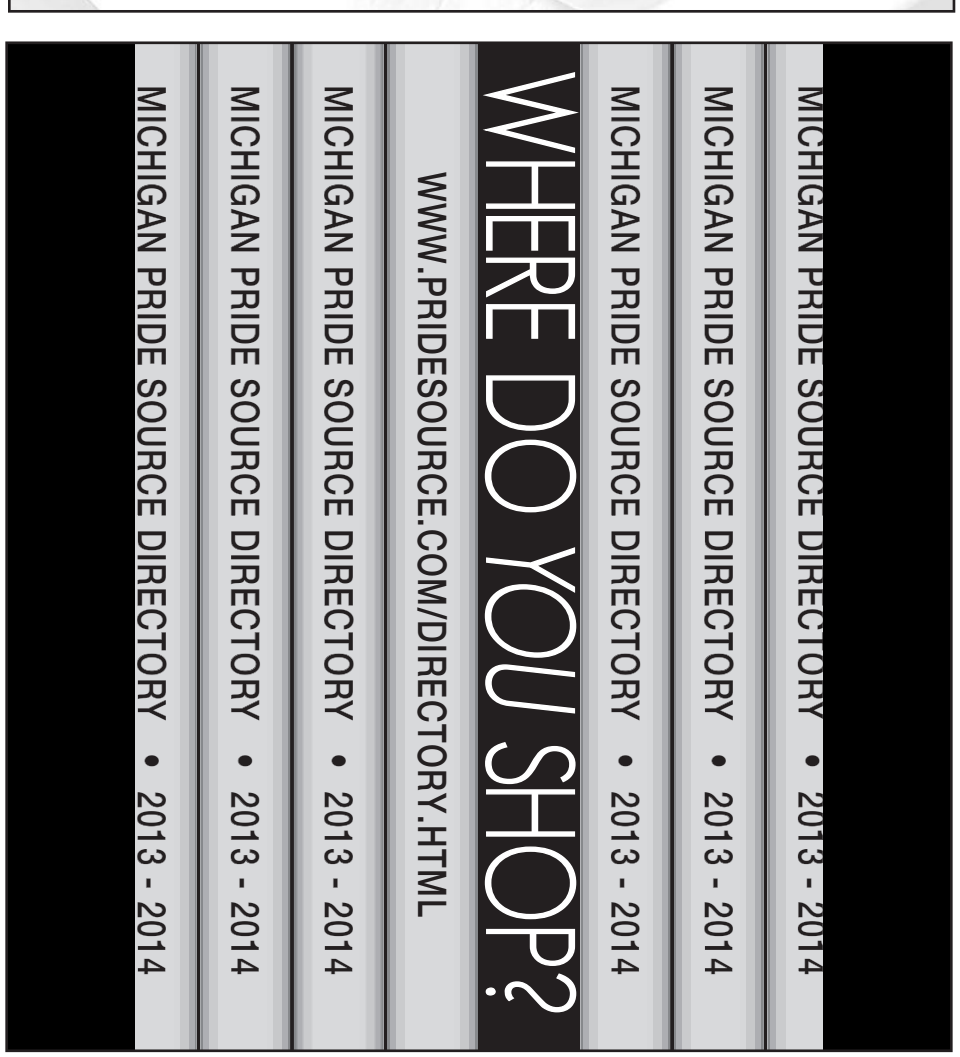
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On Advancing ENDA

"Millions of LGBT Americans go to work every day fearing that, without any warning, they could lose their jobs - not because of anything they've done, but simply because of who they are. It's offensive. It's wrong. And it needs to stop, because in the United States of America, who you are and who you love should never be a fireable offense. That's why Congress needs to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act."

Barack Obama, President of the United States

"I want to say that I have a deep respect for those who choose to stand on the side of progress for our country this week. So for those that stand up this week and answer the call for courage, I can say with confidence your courage will be respected and remembered when the history of this struggle is written."

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)

"I'm dismayed that so many years have gone by — more than a decade — and this bill still has not become law. It is time for us to enact this important legislation."

U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, (R-ME)

"So I hope my fellow senators will come together and support this important bipartisan bill without delay. And if the other body has the courage of standing up for America, to stand up for all Americans — every single American there is — and vote for the same legislation."

U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT)

"The Speaker believes this legislation will increase frivolous litigation and cost American jobs, especially small business jobs."

Michael Steel, spokesman for U.S. Rep. John Boehner (R-OH)

Where Is The High Ground?

BTL EDITORIAL

As we move forward in our collective quest for equality we are struck by the absurdity of the opposition's arguments. Whether it is the Catholic Bishops letter against the Employment Non-Discrimination Act or the rabid right wing-nuts coming out to discredit Royal Oak's non-discrimination ordinance, we find ourselves wondering if they seriously believe some of the ridiculous things they say to justify discrimination. We also wonder how long we have to endure public votes on whether any minority should be granted civil rights.

The latest rants have invoked religious freedom, and the belief that granting civil rights to a persecuted minority somehow disturbs other people's religious rights. In their letter to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. Conference of Bishops argue that, "ENDA could be used to punish as discrimination what many religions – including the Catholic religion – teach, particularly moral teaching about same-sex sexual conduct."

We pose these questions back to them: Are your teachings really that moral if they allow for gays and lesbians to be treated badly at work? Can your argument truly claim to have the higher moral ground if it allows for discrimination against another person?

Undoubtedly these questions are being asked within the Church itself. Just last week the Vatican ordered an unprecedented poll of all Catholics. Same-sex marriage, divorce, contraception and gay adoption are just some of the wide-ranging social issues featured on the survey which will be administered by the Vatican's Synod of Bishops. There is an obvious schism of opinion and the Vatican is looking for some indication of where the wind is blowing in their pews.

We believe that the religious freedom arguments reflect a desperate, last ditch attempt to scare people. Previous arguments that attempted to appeal to some level of reason have been tried and failed - LGBT people are pedophiles, we can't sustain relationships, we are all sex crazed maniacs, murderers and social misfits. The general public is now hip to these scare tactics and they don't buy them any more. So in a desperate attempt to re-instill fear that LGBT people are dangerous, they have come up with the religious freedom theme – one based entirely on dogma and not reason.

In Royal Oak the right wing opposition to the local non-discrimination ordinance has used some of the same, tired ravings, especially about bathrooms. But the core of their argument echos the Bishops' letter that religious freedoms is impinged by equality.

At press time we do not yet know the results of the voting in Royal Oak. Whether we win or lose, it is increasingly clear that the patchwork of equality in Michigan is ludicrous. If you are in Ann Arbor you have protections, but drive to Brighton and you don't. In Ferndale you can't be asked to leave a restaurant because they think you are gay, but you can be tossed out in Warren. LGBT people can be fired from a job in Dearborn, but not in Dearborn Heights. We need uniform protections in the entire state of Michigan.

This argument that equality and religious freedom are at odds is contrived and false, and meant to create anxiety and fear. Faith and Freedom Coalition founder Ralph Reed said he opposes workplace discrimination, "but this bill opens a Pandora's box of assaults on religious freedom, litigation, and compliance costs for businesses and non-profits that will be a nightmare."

Support for ENDA is overwhelming. Over 63 percent of small business owners support ENDA. Majorities of every Christian denomination, and the voting majorities in every state support it. Even half of Tea Party members in Ohio say they support passage of this legislation. There is no reasonable argument against it that resonates, so opponents must turn to fear tactics to get any response.

At press time we do not yet know the results of the voting in Royal Oak. Whether we win or lose, it is increasingly clear that the patchwork of equality in Michigan is ludicrous. If you are in Ann Arbor you have protections, but drive to Brighton and you don't. In Ferndale you can't be asked to leave a restaurant because they think you are gay, but you can be tossed out in Warren. LGBT people can be fired from a job in Dearborn, but not in Dearborn Heights.

We need uniform protections in the entire state of Michigan. We thank Unity Michigan for getting 28 cities and townships to extend protections for their citizens. The Coalition's efforts have provided a powerful education tool - town by town - about the reality of LGBT life in Michigan. People have routinely been surprised, even shocked, when they discover that LGBT can be fired, or denied housing, or refused service because of who they are perceived to be. Now is the time for the state legislature step up and to pass the amendment to the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Law that would extend protections to LGBT people statewide. It just makes sense. It is reasonable. And there is nothing to fear from it.

You have the right to remain silent. If you refuse to remain silent, the Kremlin will appoint someone to silence you.
POLICE
Russian Victims of Antigay Violence
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Pet Reparative Therapy

Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

I received an e-mail from a conservative group calling itself Balaam's Ass of America (after the OT story of the fabled talking mule), asking for a five-buck, tax-deductible contribution "on behalf of gender confused pets in need of prayer and reparative therapy."

A donation "entitles me to a subscription to Lost Sheep newsletter, an option to adopt an ex-gay pet ('Bonobos are popular among Southern Baptists this year'), and the gift of an electric shock collar with rhinestone letters, Ex-Gay Pet."

Providing LGBT pet owners with insight into BAA's plan for saving Catholic, Protestant, ReBiblican petdom from, "rampant homosexual animal domesticity: the twin scourge to pet neutering," I share the following.

"Dear Faith-Based Partner of Straight Animals of America! The cunning Serpent from the Garden of Eden is again predatory! Lesbian swans are turning up in Boston. Cutesy gay penguins are swishing about in New York City zoos. Same-sex chimps are devotedly grooming each other (and worse!) in Royal Oak, Michigan.

"If that isn't a howling shame, here's gay animal agenda propaganda (obviously a bear-faced lie) from the Oslo (Norway) Natural History Museum: 'Homosexuality has been observed for more than 1500 species, and is well documented for 500 of them.'

"Baa humbuggery! In the beginning there never was any same-sex hanky panky on Noah's Ark (though incest may have been tried, but only because of overcrowding, boredom, or lack of Gentile standup comics).

"Yes, Dear Friend: Same-sex animal distraction today is the result of satanic technologies: 1) worldwide use of cellphones with their high-frequency wave lengths altering DNA patterning and Christian missionary positioning, and 2) rampant i-POD proliferation, covertly changing animal and – most importantly – human mating calls. (The problem can be overcome by broadcasting more Christian Hip Hop/Hard Rock and by writing to Sarah Palin.)

"BAA encourages all born-again animal lovers (and who among us doesn't own, or know someone who does, a pit bull, a ferret, or a de-perfumed PC skunk?) to contact senators and congressmen demanding that LGBT, left-wing subversives be legally stopped from owning canines (especially poodles), felines (alley cats for sure), horses (riding side-saddle's a sin). Or gerbils.

"$2.50 of subscriber donation goes to building a BAA Center for Four-Legged Reparative Therapy (domestic and feral). Our Protestant Evangelical Treatment of Animals (PETA) – like that for human ex-gays – consists of prayer, celibacy (chastity belts are discrete and kosher designed), ALPO-fasting, and a period of confinement in a soundproof, fully holy-water-blessed cage or litterbox of choice – no cellphone or i-POD interference – for anywhere from last leg-hump up to 10 years (whichever comes first).

"Because: 1) gay animals are coming out everywhere, 2) pets are being coerced into leading a gay lifestyle at an alarming rate (one wonders if even the stately GOP elephant is safe), and 3) treatment space is limited, BAA also urges America's biblical role models to adopt a gay animal (12 rams are ready for home schooling in time for New Year's), to pray over, and sexually reorient same. (Last suggestion optional.)

"Think your own Christian pet might be gay? Don't panic. It's just a phase. Amen Arf!"

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Creep of the Week

OPINION BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

The Moscow City Government

As you probably already know, Russia is not exactly a paradise for LGBT people. Even talking about being gay is a crime there because it might corrupt children somehow. In fact, the only gay-related speech allowed in Russia appears to be hate speech toward gays, accompanied by ass kickings. You know, to set a good example for children.

Violence against LGBT folks is rampant. In fact, The Advocate reported that on Nov. 3 a meeting of the Rainbow Coffee Party, an LGBT social group in St. Petersburg, was paid a little visit by some gun and baseball bat toting thugs who sent two people to the hospital with injuries.

In other words, the climate in Russia is so anti-gay that a coffee klatch is cause enough for violence. It is not clear how many Russian children were saved from the perils of homosexuality by this courageous act.

In other words, the climate in Russia is so anti-gay that a coffee klatch is cause enough for violence. It is not clear how many Russian children were saved from the perils of homosexuality by this courageous act.

don't know what's going to happen, but I've got to go."

Good for him. And I hope he doesn't end up in jail.

Being anti-gay under the guise of protecting children is common. Russia's anti-propaganda law is really no different than the arguments against acknowledging in America's schools that LGBT kids exist by including them in anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies. There's this pervasive fear that if kids get wind of this gay stuff, they'll just have to try it out. It's a weak, and stupid argument, but it has had some success here in the states.

And Russia has gone ahead and made this terrifically stupid argument the law of the land. Which leads to headlines like, "Russia bans tribute to gay victims of Nazi Germany." According to the Gay Star News, "Around 20 participants applied to hold a peaceful event in Kudrinskaya Square in Moscow on 5 November." They wanted to commemorate the gays who died in the Holocaust and those who were arrested during World War II. And the Moscow City Government told them to go borscht themselves. On Halloween, no less.

And why did authorities in Moscow nix the peaceful demonstration? Because, according to GSN, "paying tribute to gay victims of Nazi Germany could potentially 'influence' children on homosexuality."

That's right folks. Should any hapless children be exposed to a group of people commemorating horrible atrocities against gay people, those children might be "influenced." What "influenced" means here is unclear, though I suspect that the Moscow authorities would find it in poor taste to accidentally engender some feelings of sympathy toward gays because kids are pretty keen at recognizing gross injustice. Of course, "influence" could also mean that authorities are worried that kids witnessing the demonstration would "turn gay."

Because as we all know, nothing is a better advertisement for homosexuality than a mass genocide. I mean, pretty soon all of the cool kids are going to be wearing the pink triangle and then heterosexuality is basically doomed. Because nobody wants to be part of the lame-o unoppressed crowd.

Keep it classy, Russia.

► Pioneer
Continued from p. 4

and counselors.

"They voted 7-0 to accept the recommendations," he said. "We were the first in the state to do it.

"To me it was important to focus on the health aspect of it. Whenever I talked I would diffuse it by saying 'I'm here to talk about the health of LGBT students. I'm not here to talk about politics or religion. Most people want what is best for the health of the kids."

At about the same time as the curriculum discussions, Colasonti pushed for the district to include sexual orientation in all of its policies. He also began traveling to speak on LGBT student health in other schools, education groups, counselors and "anyone who would listen."

Joining Forces

Because of his efforts, in 1992 he was named Michiganian of the year by the Detroit News.

In 1994 he joined forces with two other local activists – psychologist Dr. Denise Joseph and a teacher from Plymouth-Canton Schools, Michael Chiumento. Chimento had created a stir by putting up a gay history display in the middle school, and by forming the Gay and Lesbian Caucus of the Michigan Education Association.

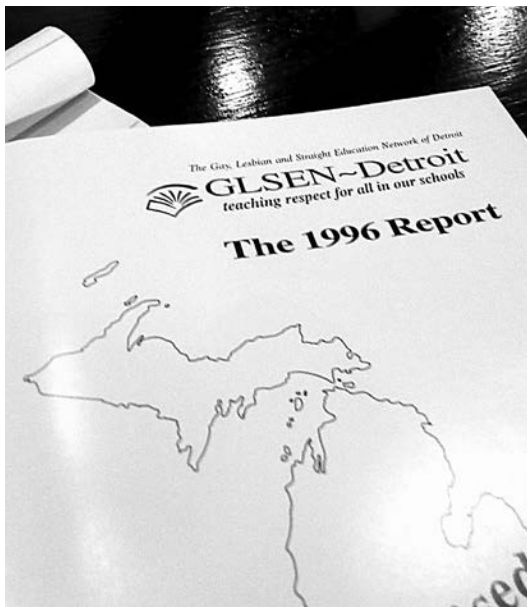
The trio had learned about a group out of Boston that was then called GLSTN – Gay, Lesbian, Student, Teacher, Network. They set about creating a Detroit chapter.

One of the biggest accomplishments was putting together the first study in southeast Michigan surveying counselors, social workers, and administrators about the environment for LGBT kids. "Bruised Bodies, Bruised Spirits" came out in 1996 and became the basis for much of the work done for LGBT students by the Michigan Department of Education and other groups looking at the needs of such kids.

In addition to managing the Detroit Chapter of GLSTN, Colasonti and Joseph traveled the country teaching others how to be more inclusive, and they helped start GLSTN chapters in Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor. GLSTN eventually changed to GLSEN.

Within Birmingham schools specifically, Colasonti and other supportive staff worked to build an inclusive environment. There were student diversity groups of all types and friendly teachers put up posters and rainbow stickers letting students know that they provided a safe space to talk about issues including sexuality.

Though Colasonti retired in 2006, the momentum he created at Groves carries on. Currently there are about 25 students involved at the school's Gay Straight Alliance, and they receive widespread support from teachers and staff. The Gay History Month display is just one example of a staff member, Shirley Chambers, reaching out to show support.


The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network of Detroit
GLSEN~Detroit
teaching respect for all in our schools
The 1996 Report

Reports produced by GLSEN-Detroit in 1996 documented the needs of LGBT students and provided one of the early blueprints for educators. Bruised Bodies, Bruised Spirits became the basis for much of the work done for LGBT students by the Michigan Department of Education and other groups.

Michael Reese and Amy Voigt are co-advisors for the group. "The GSA at Groves has done many activities and initiatives over the years, from supporting Coming Out Day, Day of Silence, LGBT History Month, and Detroit AIDS Walk," Reese said. "Perhaps my strongest memory was the first year we recognized Transgender Day of Remembrance. The students spent over a week generating awareness and support for our anti-harassment efforts, with this students signed their name on a paper ribbon strip, as a pledge to end hateful behavior. On the last day of the week the ribbons were assembled into a giant paper chain which we hung from the commons as a display of the event.

"I still remember hearing all the students in awe of how long the chain was, how many students were supporting our actions, and pointing out to classmates which signatures were theirs. It was a very powerful message that has a lasting impact on supporting the strong culture of diversity we have here at Groves."

Ways To Be Supportive

Colasonti said he realizes that even now there are many schools that do not offer support for LGBT students, but there are things concerned teachers can do. He suggested that teachers propose LGBT-related curriculum, but that they go through the proper processes to do it. He said school districts should have clear plans for dealing with bullying in general, and that teachers can introduce themselves to students by making it clear that if the students need to talk about any issues, they can come to them.

Rainbow stickers and posters about diversity can be enabling to LGBT youth, and a way to let them know who is safe to talk to. "If a teacher isn't comfortable talking about it, make sure they know someone they can refer a student to if they come to them," he said. He also encouraged people to donate LGBT-related books to school libraries.

Another issue facing many schools is that counselors were never taught about LGBT health when they went to school. That's why continuing education in this area is essential.

GLSEN remains a strong resource for parents, teachers, counselors and administrators who want more inclusive school environments.

To find out more check out http://detroitgsa.com/. For more on Birmingham Schools visit http://www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/.

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Tom is a hardworking guy from Michigan who is great at his job.
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Photo: Focus Features

Matthew McConaughey & Jared Leto Talk 'Dallas Buyers Club'

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

The AIDS crisis reached a devastating peak in the mid '80s, a time before cocktail therapies were sustaining life. Then, people were diagnosed and dead within days.

Ron Woodroof should've been.

The party boy, who was given just 30 days to live after he contracted HIV in 1986, defied the odds – and, by smuggling anti-viral medications from across the globe into the U.S., helped others do the same.

"The hard truth that I could see, and the way I approached it, was him getting HIV is what gave him his purpose in life," says Matthew McConaughey from the Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills, still looking slender after dropping 40 pounds to play Woodroof in the critically acclaimed dramedy "Dallas Buyers Club," opening Nov. 15 in Detroit. "That's the first time that he had something that he grabbed ahold to for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day, until he was here no longer. That's where he found a real identity. That's where he found a purpose."

Jean-Marc Vallée, director of "C.R.A.Z.Y." and "The Young Victoria," tells the Texas cowboy's story in this dramatized adaptation of his inspiring evolution from hard-edged homophobe to unlikely hero – and all from the perspective of a heterosexual man who thought only gay people got HIV.

"He doesn't start off as this crusader for the cause," McConaughey says. "He's not waving the flag. If anything, he's a selfish son of a bitch who's doing what he can to survive."

To find that fortitude, McConaughey channeled a buddy's real-life battle with cancer. "He had a lot of similar instincts, fight and characteristics that Ron had," he says. "I secretly had some of this based on this guy and the way he was fighting against cancer."

Using a friend to inspire his performance – along with Woodroof's diary, which the actor considered to be his "Pandora's box" – McConaughey tapped into Ron's humanity, says Vallée. "When he portrays a guy who's racist and homophobic, and then his arc changes slowly but surely without even realizing it – he's going to become the spokesperson of the gay community he's been bashing for years and years – that's what (McConaughey) brought naturally."

As he becomes a crusader for advancements in HIV medicine and the gay community, Woodroof's journey leads him to Rayon (Jared Leto, who won our hearts in the mid '90s during his "My So-Called Life" stint), an HIV-positive trans woman with just enough spunk to stand up to Woodroof's narrow-minded machismo. "Rayon is quick to love and fall in love," Leto says. "She's full of grace and charm and a huge, open heart, and Ron provides some kind of a father figure. She was shunned by her father at a very young age and, in a lot of ways, Ron provided that father figure, that big brother – and there was a lot of love there."

Vallée shares that sentiment, noting a scene where Woodroof sticks up for Rayon. "This is a love story between two guys," he says, "and we're not telling that, and it's not really about that, but these guys love each other." He pauses, laughing about the possibility of taking their relationship one or maybe two steps further. "I was asking myself, 'Should we hint to the audience that maybe they'll have sex together?'"

Leto's 'role of a lifetime'

So how did Jared Leto fare in heels? "I was a bit of a natural, to tell you the truth," he laughs. "Size 12, baby!"

The reason for that, and it's just now dawning on Leto: This ain't his first time at the rodeo. "I forgot about this, but there was another project years ago – I forgot what it was for – where I went and auditioned in drag for another film and walked down Fifth Avenue and thought I would have everybody fooled. But nope, nobody was having it."

In "Dallas Buyers Club," every time Leto slipped into those heels, he slipped right into Rayon. And he did it often.

"Every morning when I showed up on set – it didn't matter how exhausted I was – I always stepped out of that van, that glorious passenger van, in my heels," he says. "That was one of the little things that helped me lock into the character."

The transformation, though, involved more than shoes.

"You practice," he says. "It's one of the reasons why I was in character for the entire course of shooting, so I could get as much time in her skin as possible. But there was a lot going on. There was the gender. There was the voice. There was the dialect. There were the heels. There was the waxing. There were all kinds of things that made it a really unique experience."

He also had another priority: Embrace her as a sexual being.

"Oftentimes, you see this role in a film and it's a punch line, it's a bit of a stereotype, and it's also a safe choice for a lot of people," he says. "It's a role that doesn't have a lot of sexuality. I mean, the character isn't sexualized. And to me, I thought it was important not to be scared of that part."

And though the heels came easy, his biggest concern was avoiding caricature pitfalls and "representing (her) with dignity and grace."

As a "young creative kid," Leto was surrounded by a diverse circle – including transgender folks – while living city life in New York and LA. "I think that the people come to these cities to be who they really are, and you certainly come across people of all shapes and sizes and desires (who are) living their dreams as they wish them to be. That's what's so great about them."

But before securing the role of Rayon, Leto wanted to dig deeper. To do so, he met with young trans kids to discuss their challenges – and to give him a better understanding of what life looks like for transgender people. He calls that time with these teens "impactful."

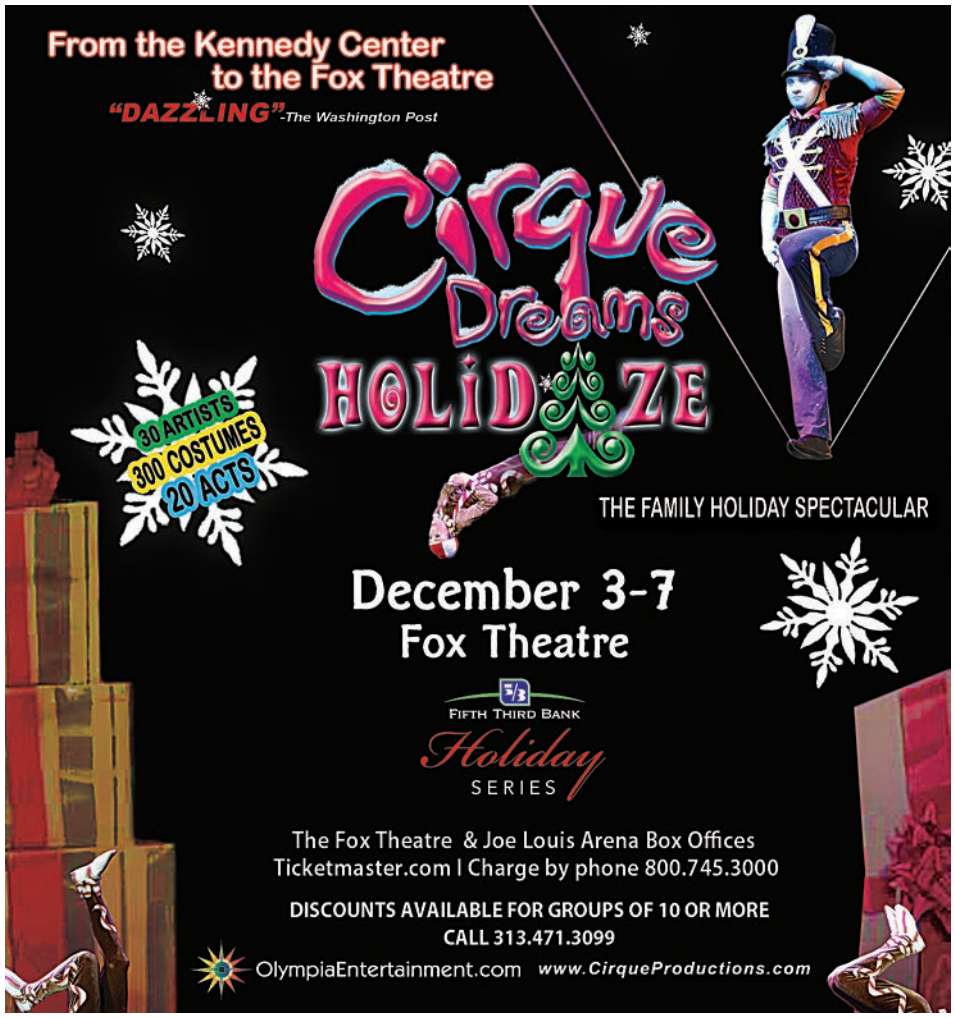
"For me, it was important to identify with the desire to get to know oneself – one's true self – because that's what identity is really about," Leto says. "It goes even beyond gender. It's who are you in your heart, and how do you express who you are? And Rayon was in a process of discovery as well. She was finding out who she really was and certainly wanted to live her life as a woman and identify with that. So, (for me, it was) a really beautiful experience and a role of a lifetime."

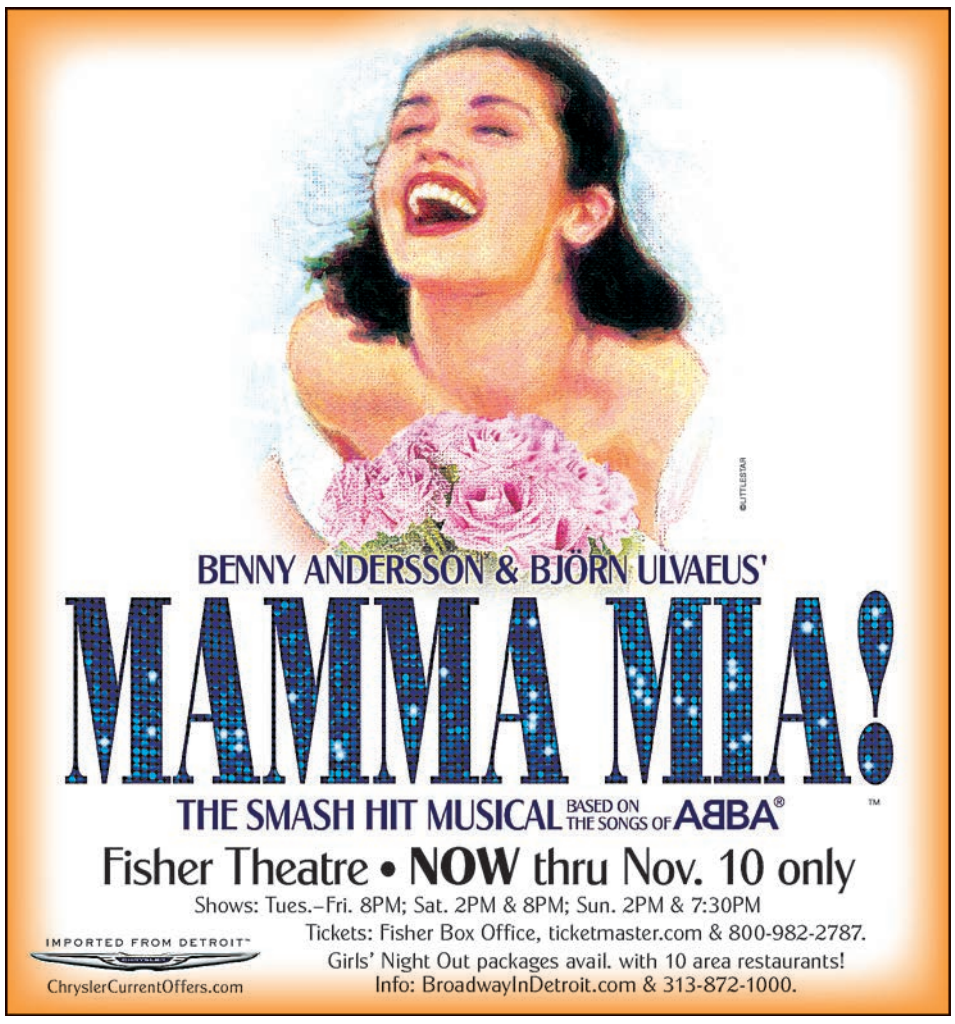
Behind the scenes it was as well. Leto recalls dancing and laughing at a bar after the cameras stopped rolling. Was it a gay bar in real life too?

"Well, if it wasn't before, it is now," he says, laughing. "We certainly had a good time there. It was wild. It was toward the end – I think it was my last day – and I just kind of let loose."

Having minimal time to mingle during the intense 25-day shoot, McConaughey remembers it a little differently: "I gotta tell you, I had blinders on." But he chuckles when asked how immersed he got with the gays.

"Well, pretty immersed in those bars!"

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Man of the Strip comes to the Magic Bag in Ferndale on Nov. 14.

Strippers Turn It Up To 98 Degrees

Boy Band Member Leads Night Of Nearly Naked Men In Ferndale

BY EMELL DERRA ADOLPHUS

So a pop singer, a jock, two thespians, a couple dancers, a fitness trainer, an ex-porn star and a radiology technologist walk into a bar. It's not a joke. It's "Men of the Strip," the male revue tour featuring veteran entertainer and boy bander Jeff Timmons of 98 degrees that lands in metro Detroit on Nov. 14 at the Magic Bag in Ferndale.

Starring (former college footballer) Chris Boudreaux, (fitness trainer) Dwayne Baldwin, (radiology technologist) Garo Bechirian, (Latin soap star) Joel Sajion, (stage actor) Keith Webb, (Chippendale performers) Kyle Efthemes and Nate Estimada, and (ex-porn star) Charles Dera, this assortment of eight performers bring eight different personalities and styles – a boy band for adults, if you will.

"It's double entendre," says Timmons. "It's men of the strip, which is obviously the strip in Las Vegas. But it's also 'men of the strip' in that they take some of their clothes off and dance. When you hear about a male revue, you think about guys grinding their pelvises in girls faces with no clothes on, as opposed to the creative elements, which are creating scenarios, having great music and choreography. It's more about the sexiness."

INFO

Men of the Strip
8 p.m. Nov. 14
The Magic Bag
22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale
www.themagicbag.com

A shirtless Timmons donned the famous Chippendales bow tie for his stint with the Las Vegas revue in 2011. After seeing the success of the film "Magic Mike" and his own performance in a strip tease, Timmons partnered with gay celebrity choreographer Glenn Douglas Packard to bring what he calls a "hipper and more modern" version of the performance style.

Timmons says his most important task was to create a fantasy and put on a good tease.

"What I noticed when I was doing the Chippendales, is that girls found the least sexy part (to be) when guys actually stripped down to their bikinis," says Timmons. "I think the scenario

> *"When you hear about a male revue, you think about guys grinding their pelvises in girls faces with no clothes on, as opposed to the creative elements, which are creating scenarios, having great music and choreography. It's more about the sexiness."*
>
> – Jeff Timmons

parts and the audience participation were the great parts of the show, and got the most reaction."

For the revue, Timmons will host and sing, leaving the muscle flexing to the other guys. He will be sharing new songs from an upcoming solo album, as well as some 98 Degrees faves.

And as one of the founding members of the band, Timmons knows what it takes to turn up the heat. But when it

See Men of the Strip, page 24

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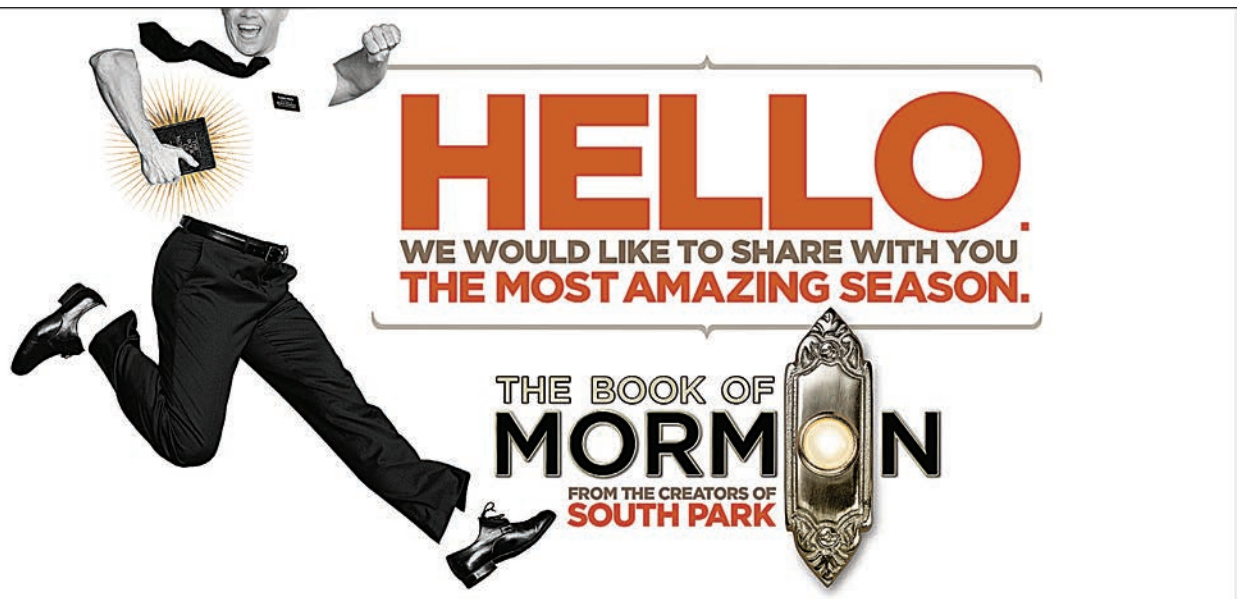

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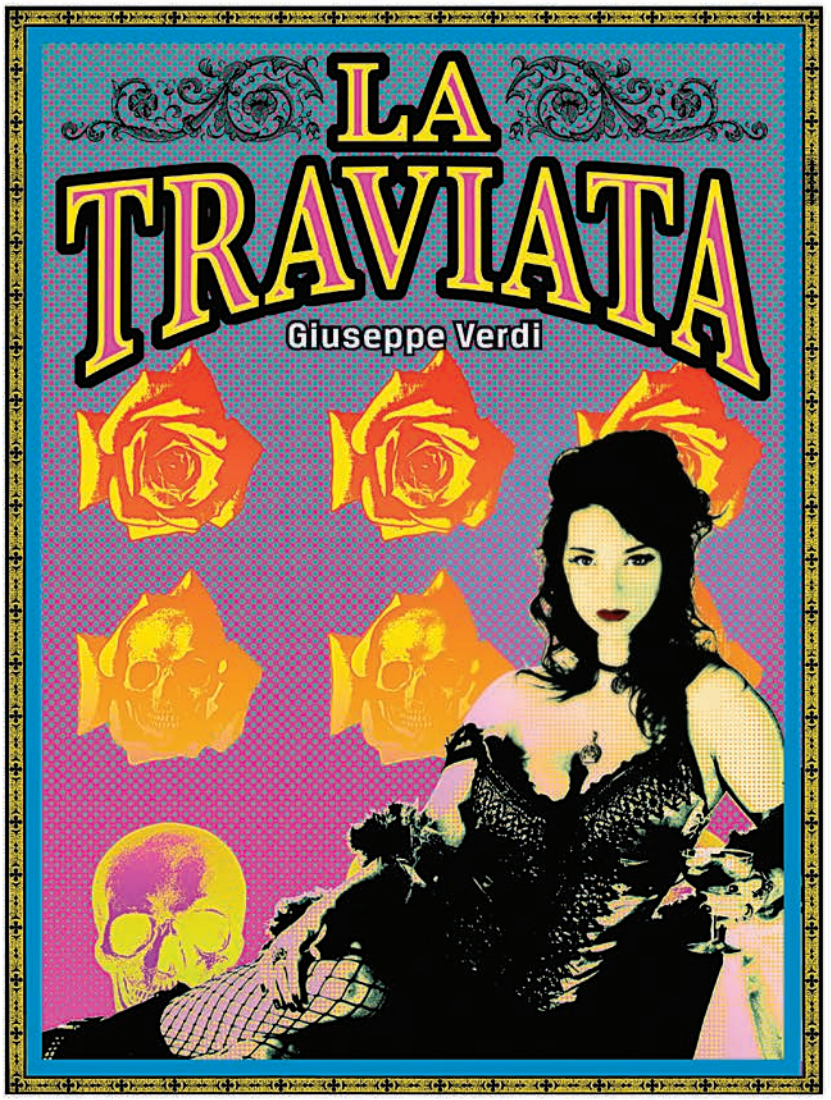

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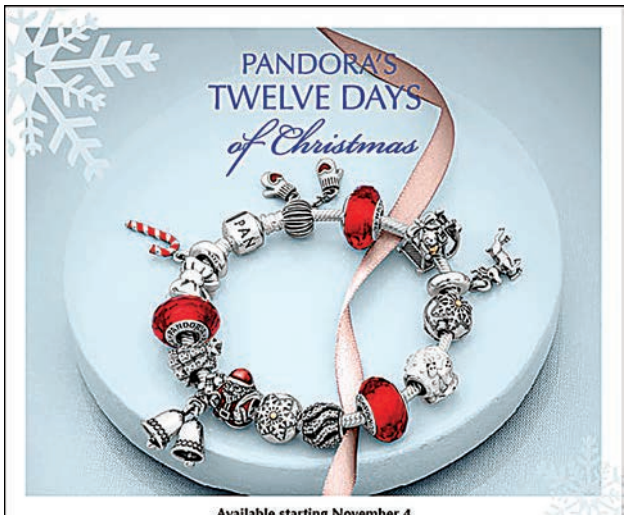
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OUTINGS

Thursday, Nov. 7

Moms in Motion 11 a.m. Bi-weekly support group for parents living with HIV. DMC/AIDS Partnership Michigan, 471 St. Antoine, **Detroit.** 313-993-3444.

November Mixer 6 p.m. Kalamazoo LGBT Professionals Network, 241 E. Kalamazoo Ave., **Kalamazoo.** Kglrc.org

20 Somethings 7 p.m. Social group for young adults. Followed by an evening out. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Beautiful-Monthly Social 7 p.m. A monthly get-together for people living with HIV and their familes and friends. Beautiful, 1415 Glynn Ct., Number 111, **Detroit.** 313-733-8183.

Dinner Club - Amici's 7 p.m. GOAL, 3249 12 Mile Road, **Berkley.** Meetup.com/GOAL-Get-Out-And-Live-LGBT

JGN Family & Friends 7 p.m. Topics vary from month to month. This is a gathering of people who have family or friends who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. Join us as we offer support, share our experiences, and learn about the issues impacting the LGBTQ and allied community. The Jewish Gay Network of Michigan, 6600 W. Maple Road, **West Bloomfield.** 248-432-5661. jgnmi.org

Friday, Nov. 8

Gay Business Networking 8 a.m. To help members increase their business through a structured, positive, and professional word of mouth. Every second Friday. GOAL, 100 Phoenix Dr., **Ann Arbor.** Meetup.com/GOAL-Get-Out-And-Live-LGBT

Veteran's Affairs Support Group 3:30 p.m. A support group for any veteran or Veteran's Affairs (VA) patient. Meets every other Friday; call for dates and room location. Veteran's Affairs, 4646 John R. St., **Detroit.** 313-576-1000, ext. 6.

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Jack & Diane. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org/

Bear Trap 9 p.m. All new weekly party for bears, cubs and their admirers. Hayloft Saloon, 8070 Greenfield Road, **Detroit.** 313-581-8913. Hayloftsaloon.com

Pride Friday 9 p.m. The one and only gay night. 18+. Guys with college ID get in free before 11 p.m. Cover: $5+. Necto, 516 E. Liberty St., **Ann Arbor.** 734-994-5835. Thenecto.com

Saturday, Nov. 9

62nd Annual Jewish Book Fair Will feature leading figures from the arts, entertainment, politics, business, journalism and much more, including an opening night appearance by Jeffrey Toobin, author, staff writer at The New Yorker and senior legal analyst with CNN. Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, **West Bloomfield.** 248-661-1900. Jccdet.org/bookfair

Women in the Arts Festival (WITA) A celebration of regional women artists. Includes performances by Sistrum - Lansing's Women's Chorus, Readers Theater directed by Laurie Hollinger, a screening of the film Thunder about Canadian (and Michigan resident) Ferron, craft sale and more. Tickets: $5-20. Circe Productions and Sistrum, 469 N. Hagadorn, **East Lansing.** producer@witafestival.com Witafestival.com

Fall LEAD Academy 10 a.m. Free. KICK, 41 Burroughs St. 109, **Detroit.** 313-285-9733. E-kick.org

Flag Football 10:30 a.m. Metro Detroit Flag Football League is open to LGBT players and our friends. All levels of play are welcome, beginners, too! We provide a recreational, fun and supportive environment. Our travel team is competitive and competes at the national level. Michigan Panthers, 19550 Sunset St, **Livonia.** info@MDFFL.org MDFFL.org

Tashmoo Biergarten 12 p.m. Pop-up European style beer garden with Detroit sensibility. Food, beer, games, and more. Location often varies. Tashmoo Biergarten, 1420 Van Dyke, **Detroit.** guten-tag@tashmoodetroit.com Tashmoodetroit.com

Lansing Fall Fest 1 p.m. An indoor celebration of Michigan beer, mead and cider. Tickets: $25-30. Lansing Fall Fest, 902 E. Saginaw Hwy, **Grand Ledge.** Lansingfallfest.com/

Men's Discussion Group 6 p.m. Lighthearted or in-depth discussion on a variety of topics. For gay, bi-affectional, and transgender men 18 and up. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Open Meditation Saturdays 9 p.m. A communal, non-hierarchical meditation space open to all. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Drag Queen Bingo 10 p.m. A fun alternative to your usual weekend hot spots. Shows get out just early enough for you to hit the local clubs or bars! Refreshments from our full coffee bar (coffees, teas, smoothies), sodas, water, and more. Tickets: $20. 18+. Club Five15, 515 S. Washington Ave., **Royal Oak.** 248-515-2551. five15.net

Sunday, Nov. 10

Regardless Of (Narcotics Anonymous Meeting) 7 p.m. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor.** 734-995-9867. jimtoycenter.org

The Reel Thing - Lesbian Movies at the Emagine 7 p.m. Every second Sunday, a LGBT-themed movie will be played. Title not to be revealed until night of each showing! GOAL, 200 N. Main St., **Royal Oak.** Meetup.com/GOAL-Get-Out-And-Live-LGBT

Monday, Nov. 11

Fun Run & Walk Program 6:30 p.m. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, **Kalamazoo.** 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

Higher Ground 6:30 p.m. Weekly support group meetings for people living with HIV/AIDS. Each meeting includes meditation and peer discussions. Self-Run, **Royal Oak.** 586-427-1259. info@hghiv.org

Nest Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Monthly Bible study focusing on LGBTQ issues. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 508 Denner St., **Kalamazoo.** Kglrc.org

Pride NA 6:30 p.m. Confidential and anonymous. Open to all individuals impacted by addiction. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo.** 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

Movement with Kristi Faulkner Dance 7 p.m. A different genre of movement each week, including modern dance, ballet, jazz, hip hop/breaking, soft shoe tap dance, and stretch and strengthening. Workshops are designed for beginning/intermediate movers ages 16-55. Tickets: $5. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Tuesday, Nov. 12

People of Victory 12 p.m. A bi-weekly support group for all women living with HIV. People of Victory, 4201 St. Antoine, **Detroit.** 313-805-7061.

Older Adult and Senior Helpline 4 p.m. Provides peer counseling, empathy

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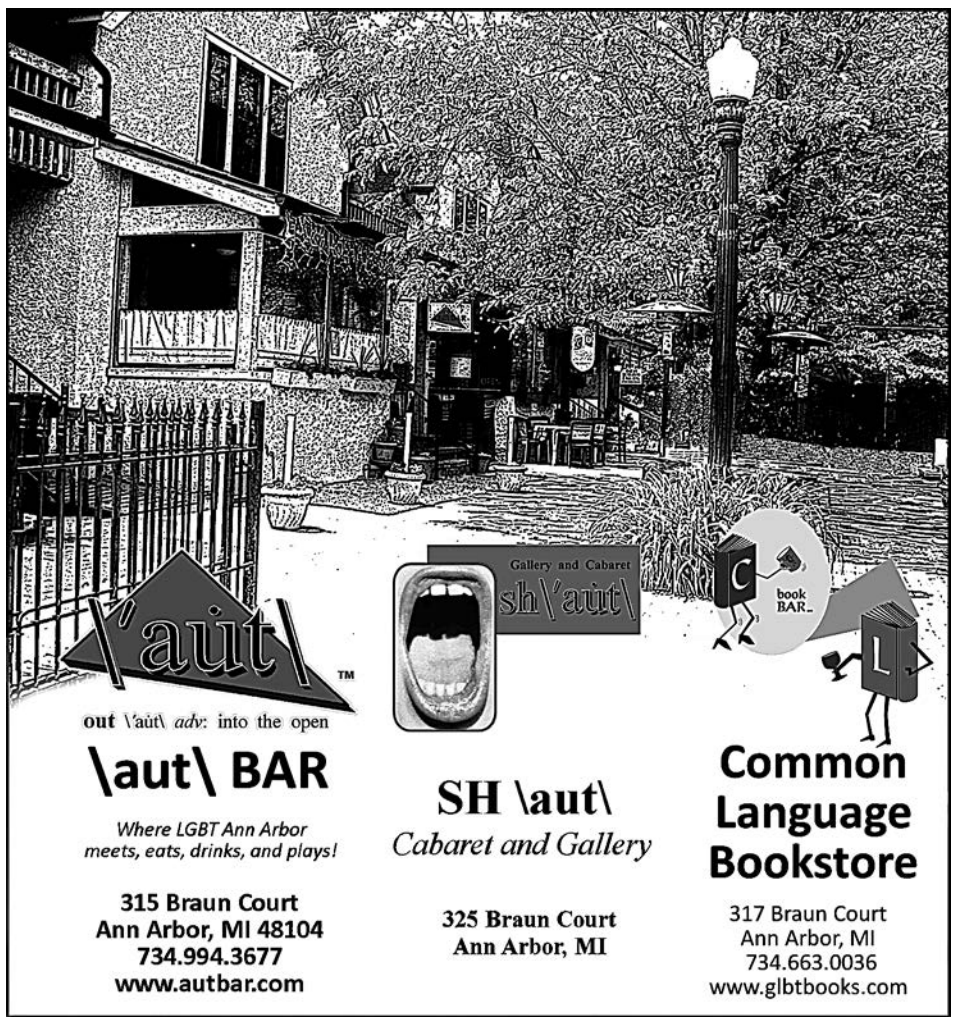

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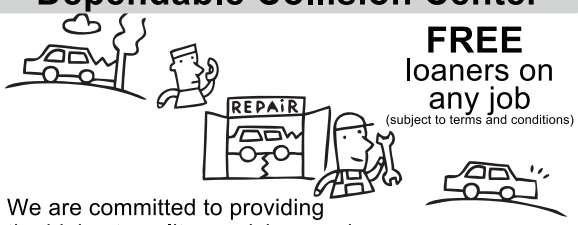

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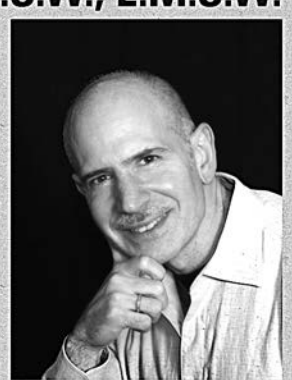

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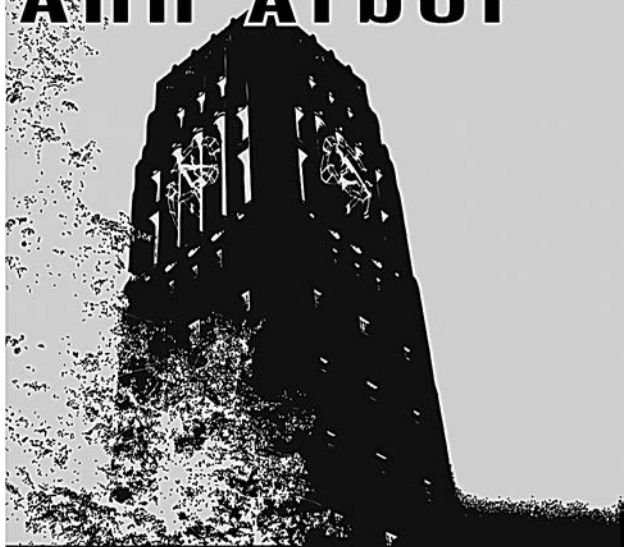

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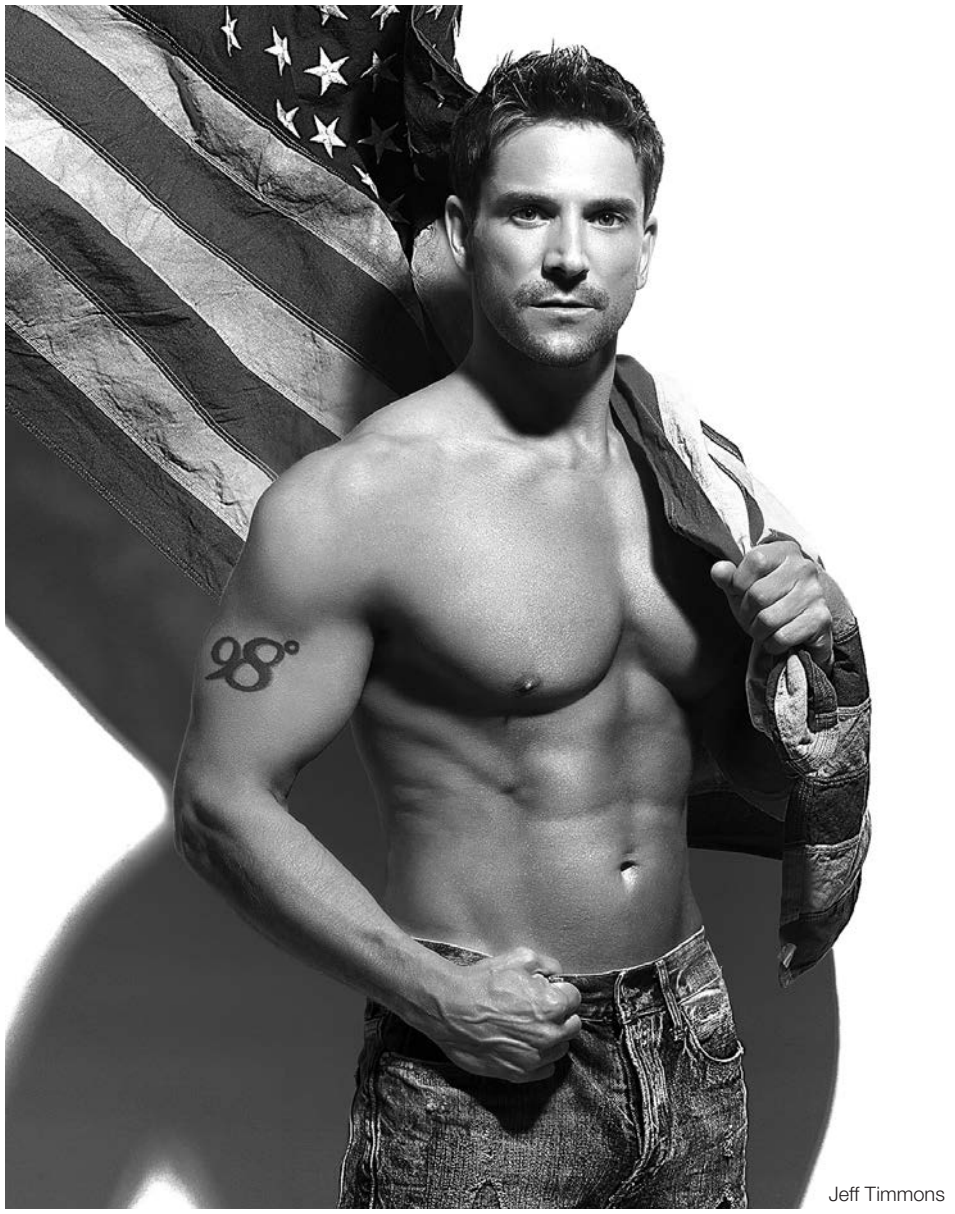


Jeff Timmons

► Men of the Strip

Continued from p. 16

came time to choose the hot-bodied leading men for his revue, he left the task up to the professionals – the gays.

"I am not the best at doing that," he laughs. "Glenn has the eye for that kind of stuff. He knows what guys like, what girls like. What types of personalities. What types of looks. I don't know what I am doing, so of course I picked all the wrong guys."

Hundreds of guys judged by their brains, brawn and um, assets were narrowed down to eight after casting calls in New York, Los Angeles, Miami and Las Vegas.

"(Glenn) was able to pen it down to eight guys that he thought would not only be good-looking but all really charismatic guys as well. He came in to work with these guys who look like bodybuilders. He literally had them in tears," says Timmons. "Some of the guys are seasoned veterans. We have one of the guys, he comes from a family of preachers and they think he is coming out to do a different kind of show. Another guy is putting himself through school. Another guy has a girlfriend who doesn't want him to do it. Another is going through a divorce. We have a collection of guys and we see how they mesh together throughout the process."

We smell a good reality show. He agrees: "A bunch of Type-A, whipped-up guys – they all have very distinct personalities and all are entertainers. That's when the decision was made (to) do the TV show. We gotta put these guys in the house together," says Timmons. The reality show follows the performers as they coordinate their residency in Las Vegas. It tentatively starts shooting later this year.

Meanwhile, Timmons managed to get all the performers to stay under the same roof for their Men of the Strip calendar shoot, which features a behind-the-scenes look at the process online that includes lots and lots of muscles.

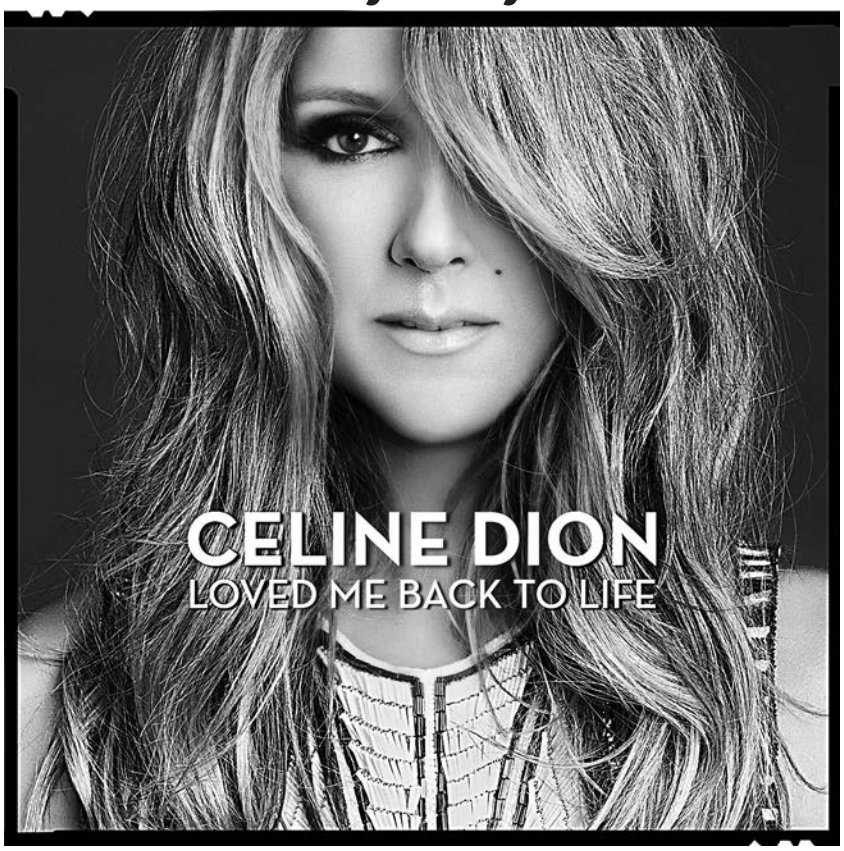
Timmons notes, "We're going to take this genre to a different level."

Hot in here, isn't it?

Hear Me Out

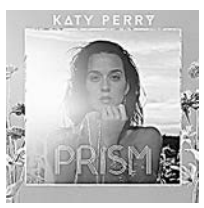
Celine Dion, Katy Perry

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI



Celine Dion, 'Loved Me Back to Life'

To have the glass-shattering lung power that Celine Dion has built an empire of love songs on in the last 20-some years hardly matters anymore. Shock value, personal stories of triumph and/or tragedy, and twerking – that's how you sell an album, and Dion isn't about to rub up on Robin Thicke. So that the singer is calling her latest, and first English-language album in six years, an "edgier" affair isn't surprising. There's a new generation of Adele fans still waiting to discover Celine's still-powerful belt. And oh, does she belt. "Thankful," a gospel-tinged highlight, is the kind of classic Celine song where you can practically see her doing that signature boob bop as she goes in for a series of runs. And there's a choir. And that dramatic pause. But there's also those notes that carry out the tunes that sound raspy and strained, like she's serious about taking a trip to the dark side. Not like Eminem dark – but "Somebody Loves Somebody," putting a no-good flame in his place, bites down with a set of teeth that Dion, always so sweet and pure, has rarely shown. Another glorious shift that goes gritty is "Breakaway," a remarkable, spine-tingling showcase of the diva's voice. Sounding smooth as silk, Celine reels it in on the refreshingly subtle "Thank You" and elicits man tears on "Always Be Your Girl," a touching ode to her son. A collaboration with Ne-Yo, "Incredible" is a tepid mid-tempo, and the inclusion of two songs from her Vegas show – a cover of Janis Ian's "At Seventeen" and her duet with Stevie Wonder on "Overjoyed" – feel like padding on an otherwise strong, creative turning point in Dion's career. *Grade: B+*



Katy Perry, 'Prism'

Damn you, divorce. You went and made Katy Perry all grown-up. Where's the fireworks? The teenage dreams? They're few and far between on Perry's third major release, where her personal woes become cathartic self-empowerment anthems and criminally written true-life tales. Because this is possibly the worst of Perry's career, let's get "Ghost" out of the way. The track wants to be taken seriously. And it *is* a serious song: Aside from the introspective ballad "By the Grace of God," it's the most forward she's been musically with regard to her relationship with Russell Brand and his text breakup. But these fourth-grade diary scribblings – " ... but you hit send and disappeared in front of my eyes" – cheapen any emotion we're supposed to be feeling. "This is How We Do" is an embarrassment, too. And not because Perry "raps." Again, its rankness is due to how much the content is dumbed down with cringe-worthy words about getting nails done "all Japanese-y" and "sucking real bad at Mariah Carey-oke." "Prism" doesn't suck *real* bad, though. It has its moments, all of which come early: galvanizing mantra "Roar" has a chorus so insanely catchy it's no wonder it ruled the charts for so long, power ballad "Unconditionally" soars to cosmic heights, and "Legendary Lovers" takes Perry to India, where the mysteriousness of the track, and the sultriness of her feathered voice, is imbued with a surprisingly not-lame Bollywood sound. So, cool – she's taking artistic risks. But by the end of "Prism," you kind of wish Katy were still kissing girls and blasting Reddi-wip from her tits. *Grade: C+*

Also Out

Donna Summer, 'Love to Love You Donna'

Spearheaded by her longtime collaborator and husband, Bruce Sudano, this posthumous tribute to Donna Summer recruits some of the best in the business to put a new spin on the disco gems in the queen's catalog. It's a (re)mixed bag. The good: Giorgio Moroder's euphoric "Love to Love You Baby" and his other contribution, "La Dolce Vita," a song he'd been working on with Summer before she passed last year that now – with his "we miss her so" intones – serves as an elegy. The not so good: A version of "Last Dance" that just goes to show that some songs of Summer's should go untouched.

Panic! at the Disco, 'Too Weird to Live, Too Rare to Die!'

The arena-pop trio has always prided itself on being pretty odd. And though this isn't them at their weirdest – or even their best, really – there are some unexpected turns on the band's techno-tinged fourth album. Among them, a sample of a Sesame Street jingle on "Vegas Lights," an EDM track as glittery as the city – the boys' hometown – they're celebrating; "Girls/Girls/Boys," a bisexuality anthem with '80s spirit; and the brooding standout "Casual Affair," an electro-rocker that has more in common with Depeche Mode than Panic! at the Disco.

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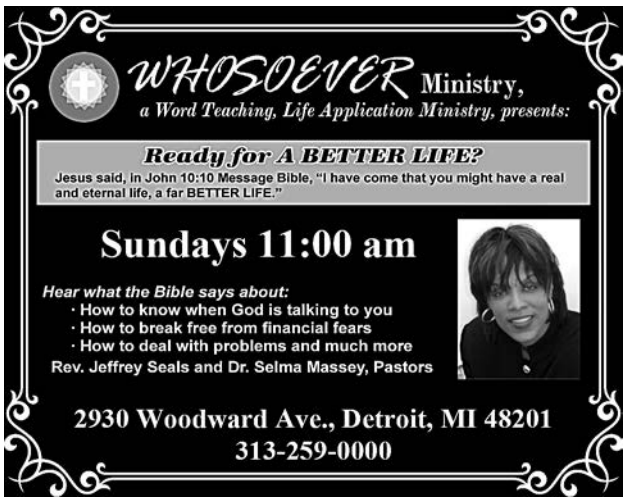
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► Happenings

Continued from p. 22

community resources for LGBT adults. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 1-800-398-4297. goaffirmations.org

Examining Civil Rights 6 p.m. Free. LGBT Resource Center and the Broad Art Museum, 547 E. Circle Dr., **East Lansing.** 517-884-3900. Lgbtrc.msu.edu

Life's a Stitch 6:30 p.m. Open to those who Crochet, Knit, Quilt, Needlepoint, Macrame and Jewelry. Free. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Tea & Talk 8 p.m. Open discussion with free tea and treats. Triple Goddess New Age Bookstore, 1824 E. Michigan Ave., **Lansing.** 517-347-2112. triplegoddessbookstore.net

Wednesday, Nov. 13

Jam Sessions 3 p.m. Bi-weekly support group for youth (13-24) years of age living with HIV. The Horizons Project (WSU School of Medicine/Children's Hospital of Michigan), 3127 E. Canfield, **Detroit.** 313-966-2589.

Michigan Theater "Monday Funnies Film Series" Classic comedies every Monday evening. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Sep. 9 - Dec. 9. 734-668-8397. Michtheater.org

Oakland University "Bill Summers" Tickets: $8-14. Varner Recital Hall, Oakland University, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. Nov. 5 - Nov. 8. 248-370-2030. Oakland.edu

Olympia Entertainment "Hunter Hayes" With special guest Ashley Monroe. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Nov. 10. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Sleeping with Sirens with special guest Issues & Our Last Night" All ages. Tickets: $23-25. 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Nov. 8 - Nov. 9. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark "Gretchen Peters" Tickets: $15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Nov. 13. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Magic Bag "Albert Hammond Jr. " Tickets: $20. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 7 p.m. Nov. 11. 248-544-3030. Themagicbag.com

The Majestic "Dr. Dog" Tickets: $20+. Majestic Theater, 4120-4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. Nov. 9. 313-833-9700. Majesticdetroit.com

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

Snow White $8-15. Henry Ford Community College Theatre Arts, 5101 Evergreen Road, Dearborn. Nov. 15 - 24. 313-845-9817. theatre.hfcc.edu

PROFESSIONAL

4000 Miles $41-48. The Jewish Ensemble Theatre Company at Aaron DeRoy Theatre on the campus of the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Nov. 6 - Dec. 1. 248-788-2900. jettheatre.org

A Facility for Living $17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Nov. 7 - Dec. 29. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

Adult Education $10. The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks. Nov. 8. 269-756-3879. acorntheater.com

Angels in America Part II: Perestroika A staged reading. Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 6 p.m. Nov. 10. 810-237-1530. flintyouththeatre.org

Collected Stories $27-29. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Through Nov. 17. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

ComedySportz Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 877-636-3320. comedysportzdetroit.com

Defending the Caveman $38. City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Nov. 14 - 24. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Florodora $12-15. Comic Opera Guild at Towsley Auditorium, Morris Lawrence Building, Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron Dr., Ann Arbor. Nov. 9. 734-995-0530. comicoperaguild.org

Jerry's Girls $27-46. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Nov. 14 - Jan. 5. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

Jim Belushi & The Chicago Board of Comedy $29-$55. The Whiting, 1241 E. Kearsley St., Flint. 8 p.m. Nov. 9. 810-237-7333. thewhiting.com

La Traviata $25-125. Michigan Opera Theatre at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Nov. 16 - 24. 313-237-SING. motopera.org

Mamma Mia! $30-76. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Nov. 5 - 10. 800-982-2787. broadwayindetroit.com

Medium RARRR $10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Through Nov. 9. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Shape of a Girl $12. Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. Nov. 15. 800-WHARTON. whartoncenter.com

Sleeping Beauty $5-10. PuppetART at Detroit Puppet Theater, 25 E. Grand River Ave., Detroit. Through Nov. 30. 313-961-7777. puppetart.org

Spank! The Fifty Shades Parody $42. Miller Auditorium, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. 8 p.m. Nov. 16. 269-387-2300. milleauditorium.com

Sundays at Go Comedy! Pay-what-you-can at the door. Go Comedy! Improv Theater, 261 E. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-327-0575. gocomedy.net

The Graduate $20-38. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. 3 p.m. Nov. 10. 586-286-2222. macombcenter.com

The Hound of the Baskervilles $18. Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through Nov. 23. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

The Vast Difference 18.50-$42. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through Dec. 14. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

This is How it Goes $5-20. UDM Theatre Company at Marygrove Theatre, 8425 W. McNichols Road, Detroit. Nov. 15 - 24. 313-993-3270. theatre.udmercy.edu

Editor's Pick

Ann Arbor's Michigan Theater is hosting, "Monday Funnies," a weekly film series centered around acclaimed comedies. Having already presented "The Blues Brothers," the series will play the following films in November: "Bridesmaids," "The Graduate," "This Is Spinal Tap," "Love Actually" and "Bad Santa."

"Bridesmaids," the next showing, is presented by Kerrytown Market and Shops and O'Neal Construction. Starring Kristen Wiig and Maya Rudolph, the movie highlights a maid of honor's life as she attempts to juggle the obligations of being part of a team of "colorful" bridesmaids. The film will be shown on Nov. 11.

Monday Funnies is held at 7 p.m. every Monday through Dec. 9 at Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Tickets range from $7.50 to $10. For more information, call 734-668-8463 or visit www.michtheater.org.

COBO Support Group 5 p.m. Coming out, being out. EMU LGBTRC, **Ypsilanti.** 734-487-4149. Emich.edu/lgbtrc

Significant Other Support 7 p.m. Discussion and support group for friends and loved ones of LGBT. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Sistrum Weekly Rehearsal 7 p.m. Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus, 215 N. Capital Ave., **Lansing.** Sistrum.org

Karaoke Night 9 p.m. Lansing Association for Human Rights, 1250 Turner St., **Lansing.** 517-487-5338. lahronline.org

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Mahler's Fourth Symphony" Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Nov. 7 - Nov. 8. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Lansing Symphony Orchestra "Beethoven & Mozart" Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan State University, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 8 p.m. Nov. 9. 800-WHARTON. Lansingsymphony.org

CONCERTS

Blind Pig "Skylar Grey" All ages. Tickets: $15. Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Nov. 12. 734-996-8555. Blindpigmusic.com

ART'N'AROUND

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "From the Archives: Forging Cranbrook's Gatescape" 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Oct. 5 - Feb. 22. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Detroit Institute of Arts "Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy" Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 1 - Jan. 13. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

Grand Rapids Art Museum "Saturday All Day with The Arts" Drop-in family activities. Grand Rapids Art Museum, 101 Monroe Center, Grand Rapids. Aug. 3 - Dec. 28. 616-831-1000. artmuseumgr.org

Krasl Art Center "Sketches to Sculptures, Rendered Reality: Sixty Years With Marshall M. Fredericks" Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph. Nov. 8 - Jan. 12. 269-983-0271. Krasl.org

Michigan State University Museum "Extraordinary Ordinary People: American Masters of Traditional Arts" 409 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. Sep. 3 - Dec. 20. 517-355-7474. museum.msu.edu

MOCAD "The Past is Present" 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Sep. 6 - Jan. 5. 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

Pewabic Pottery "Made by Hand: Detroit's Ceramic Legacy" Detroit Historical Museum, 5401 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 19 - Jan. 12. 313-833-1805. Pewabic.org

River Gallery "Finding True" Graceann Warn. Paintings and Assemblages. 120 S. Main St., Chelsea. Oct. 12 - Dec. 1. 734-433-0826. Chelsearivergallery.com

robert kidd gallery "Kevin Tolman: Recent Works" 107 Townsend St., Birmingham. Nov. 9 - Dec. 19. 248-642-3909. Robertkiddgallery.com

Saugatuck Center for the Arts "Point Counterpoint" Cyril Lixenberg screen prints. Free. Saugatuck Center for the Arts, 400 Culver St., Saugatuck. Sep. 1 - Nov. 9. 269-857-2399. Sc4a.org

The Scarab Club "Annual Photography Exhibition" The Scarab Club, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit. Oct. 16 - Nov. 16. 313-831-1250. Scarabclub.org

UICA "Pulso: Arte de las Americas / Art of the Americas" Two Fulton West, Grand Rapids. Oct. 30 - Dec. 4. Uica.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Performing Still Images: David Claerbout and Matthew Buckingham" 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Aug. 28 - Jan. 5. 734-763-4186.

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Classifieds

01-ANNOUNCEMNTS LGBT AA MEETINGS

Ann Arbor-Friday

7:30 pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church Gay AA, 306 N. Division St. Closed/Discussion.

Bloomfield Hills-Sunday / Tuesday / Thursday

8:00 pm, North Woodward Equality, Birmingham Unitarian Church, 38651 Woodward, Bloomfield Hills, lower level classroom - enter first walkway off Woodward entrance. Big Book/12 & 12 Meeting.

Detroit-Tuesday / Friday

8:00 pm, Downtown Gay AA, Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 West Fort St. Closed/Discussion (Open 1st Friday of every month).

Farmington Hills-Monday

8:00 pm, Suburban West Gay AA, Universalist Unitarian Church, 25301 Halstead (Between 10 & 11 Mile Roads) Closed / Discussion.

Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday

11:30 a.m., Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.

Ferndale-Wednesday

8 p.m., Diversity Wednesday Gay AA, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 540 W. Lewiston @ Livernois. Closed/Discussion.

Ferndale-Saturday

1 p.m. Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.

8 p.m. Go After Your Sobriety Gay AA, Drayton Ave Presbyterian Church, 2441 Pinecrest. Closed/Discussion.

Livonia-Friday

8 p.m., West Side Story's Gay AA, Providence Medical Center, 7 Mile & Newburgh. Closed/Discussion.

Warren-Monday

7:30 p.m., Eastside Serenity Gay AA, Odd Fellow's Hall, 830 S Monroe St Closed/Discussion.

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Solution to puzzle from page 30

B	E	L	A	■	S	U	L	F	A	■	S	C	O	T
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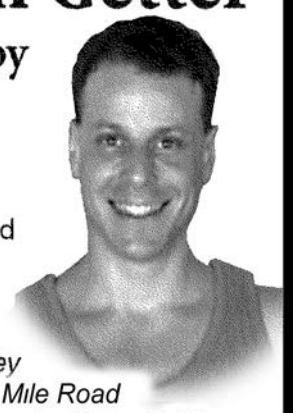

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Barry V. Levine and and Patrick Hanley in Jeff Baron's "Visiting Mr. Green." Photo: Matrix Theatre Company

Good Company Makes For A Great 'Visit'

BY CAROLYN HAYES

REVIEW

Visiting Mr. Green

Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley, Detroit. 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday & 3 p.m. Sunday through Nov. 24. 2 hours. $15-20. 313-967-0599.

www.matrixtheatre.org

Jeff Baron's distinctly self-contained "Visiting Mr. Green" tells a curious story of one relationship by showing its two characters together – and only together. Yet in the production currently at Matrix Theatre Company, director Lisa Hodge Kander, Ph.D., demonstrates how even strangers' influence on each other can extend beyond the space and time they share. On the strength of a deceptively constrained text and a compelling pair of performances, what unfolds is an intellectually absorbing journey with a thoroughly heartwarming core.

The play's premise is spread thick across an expository first scene: Corporate climber Ross Gardiner (Patrick Hanley), after almost running over octogenarian Mr. Green (Barry V. Levine) at a Manhattan crosswalk, has been creatively sentenced to weekly home visits with the old man, to provide assistance and company as needed. But if Ross is initially nonplused at the prospect, the obligation quickly turns into a mission, as the recently widowed Mr. Green balks at and acidly rejects the implication that he needs help of any kind. Thus, partly through the court's insistence and partly for the challenge of it, the persistently ingratiating Ross brings Kosher meals and groceries, cleans up unsightly and unsafe clutter, fetches mail, and all the while works to break through his charge's bristly defenses.

True to the title, the show exists solely in the context of these sessions, with each scene encapsulating a single visit from beginning to end. This allows the viewer to become very familiar with the main room of Mr. Green's apartment, for which scenic designer Christina Killmar delivers a lovingly feminine space vibrant with the absence of his beloved wife, and properties designer Carson Killmar overwhelms it with the junk of meaningless malaise. Add to this a depressingly small rotation of nubby old-man cardigans, courtesy of costumer Kirstin L. Bianchi, and the setting perfectly conveys a man locked into his former life, only now devoid of his chief happiness and reason for living.

And Levine delivers just such a character, clinging acerbically to a routine engineered for two. The actor rightly commands the world of the play, proceeding only on his terms and at his pace. Much of the first act finds Hanley in supplication, asking questions about Mr. Green's late wife or his unshakable Jewish identity (referenced not only in visual and textual cues, but also in the Hebrew-sung music that lighting and sound designer Neil Koivu deploys throughout the show). The actors bob pleasantly together through their scenes, grounding their wryly comic disagreements in an appreciative foundation that makes the improbable accord that grows between them feel organic and earned.

But for all the friendly progress the two men initially make, their camaraderie breeds discoveries that turn the second act to discord. Here, Hanley is compellingly revealing in an impassioned confessional monologue, and Levine's expressive face speaks volumes as his plainly established worldview is shockingly challenged. Although the two cannot seem to make their conflict fully boil over, their deep sentiment shines through, despite the sputtering tension. To say that these strangers help each other grow and contend with their own lives is technically true, but it happens in a way more fresh and unexpectedly special than that old chestnut could convey.

This "Visiting Mr. Green" is a testament to how the confinements of the theatrical medium can yield limitless fruit. Here is a play that tracks a forced, unlikely relationship and explores themes of loneliness, dependence, familial tumult, hardship, and obligation to others and self, all while telling a warmly affecting story with the capacity to move viewers to tears. For those seeking thematically sticky exploration, or the gratifying simplicity of feel-good fare, this offering has sustenance to spare.

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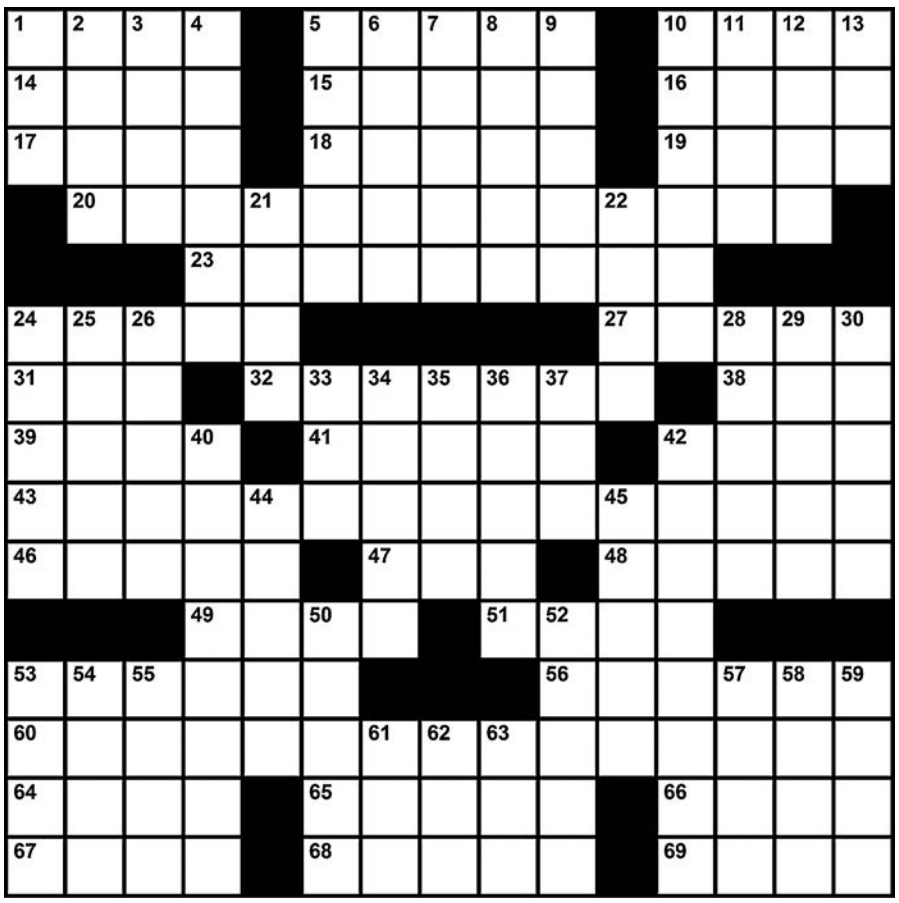
Getting Excited Again About Grace's Friend



Across

1 Alec of "Desperate Housewives"
5 Some Barneys locations
10 Dog-eared
14 Plunk down
15 "Dirty Dancing" director Ardolino
16 Bulb lighter
17 Head light?
18 A queen, for example
19 "___! Went the Strings of My Heart"
20 Start of a quip by Grace about her friend
23 Lover who's slow to finish in bed?
24 Prying person
27 Make one's own
31 Berliner's article
32 A kid may have a couple of gay ones
38 Sarcastically humorous
39 Business boss
41 George of "The Gay Sisters"
42 Big failure
43 More of the quip
46 Prettify
47 Co. for surfers
48 Stud fees?
49 Aerosmith's "Love ___ Elevator"
51 Frat party robe
53 Exhausts
56 Tropical fruits
60 End of the quip
64 Load of money
65 Tether
66 "She" to Baudelaire
67 Ollie's sidekick
68 Word on some condom wrappers
69 Gin flavor

Down

1 Dashboard inits.
2 "There oughta be ___"
3 Type of sci, in college
4 Handsome Greek god
5 Type of badge for the morally straight
6 Tickle a funny bone
7 It's found among Whitman's bloomers
8 Hispanic family org.
9 Hospital fluid
10 Oz man
11 Ruler of Valhalla
12 Split
13 Albert to Armand, in "The Birdcage"
21 "Dragnet" org.
22 Simpatico sounds
24 "So long!"
25 Said no to
26 "You're ___ talk"
28 One of the little hooters
29 Show to be true
30 Uses the keyboard
33 "Modern Family" network
34 Sink hole
35 Lairs of bears
36 Not appropriate
37 And that's not all
40 Do a rite of initiation without cutting
42 Raises the dough
44 Cause of "bed death"
45 Helmeted cartoon character
50 Big fruit of New York?
52 Montgomery Clift's hometown
53 Dave Pallone and others
54 Diamonds, e.g.
55 Scatter Fitzgerald
57 Balls
58 Northern capital
59 Nemesis of Tinkerbell
61 Gay porn star Baldwin
62 Enjoy Stephen Pyles
63 Abbr. of old in Tatu's land

Solution on pg. 28

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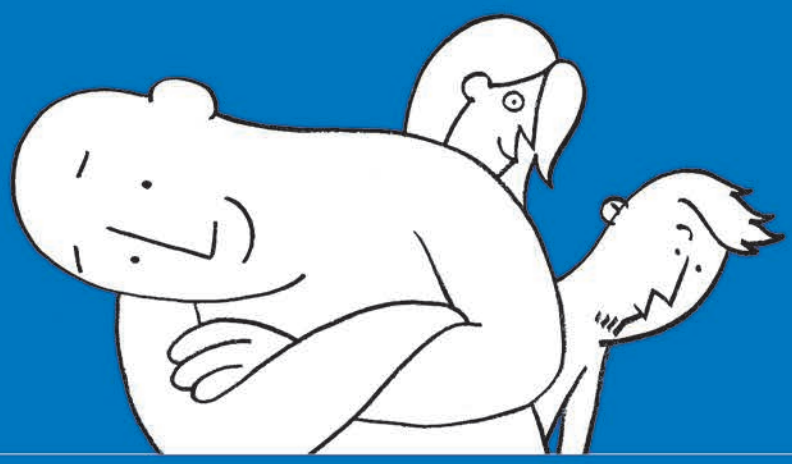

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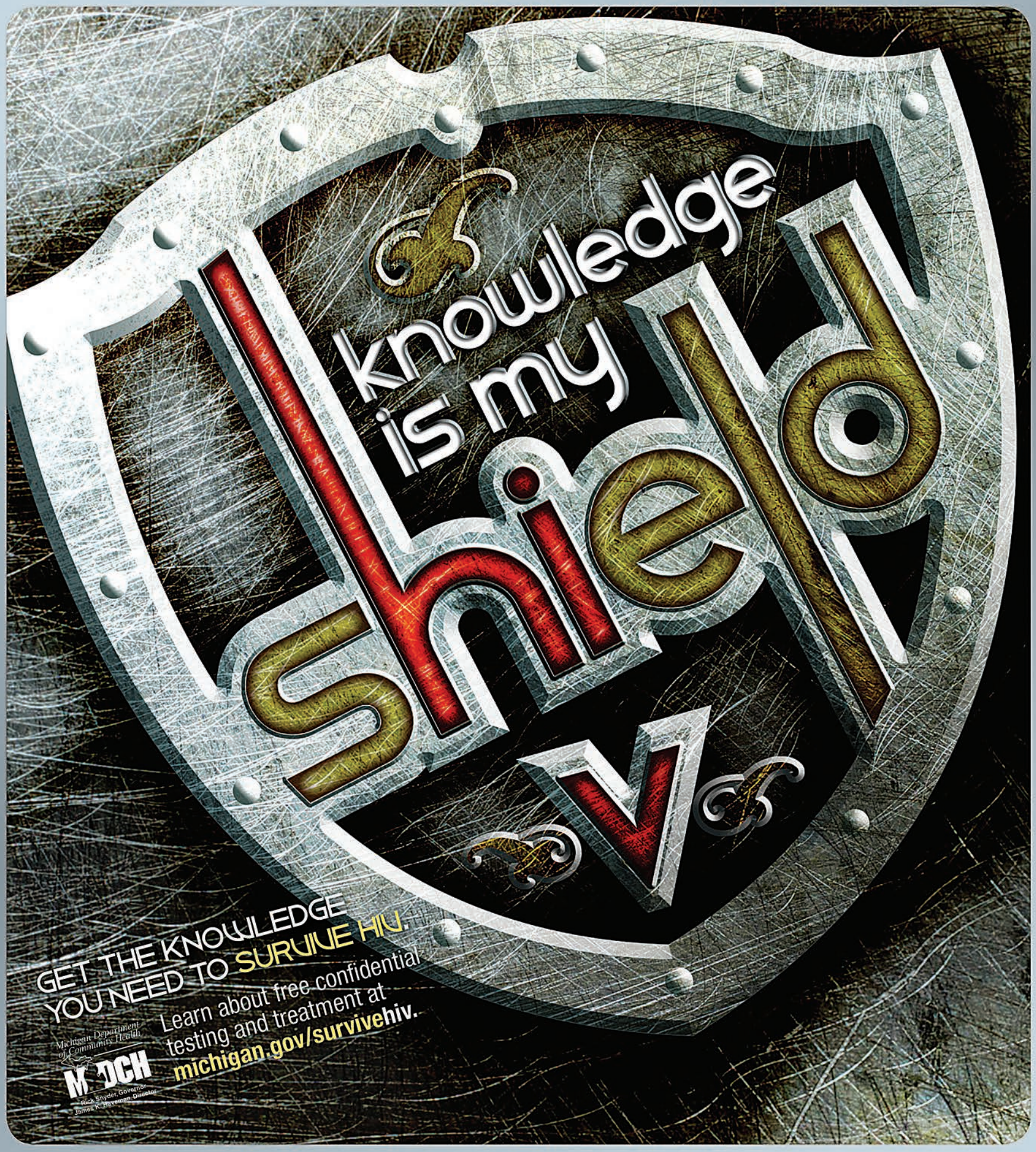
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